

INDUSTRY NEWS

Lumber Prices

Lumber pricing remains at relatively low levels. The mills are struggling fiercely but continue to ratchet down production to match demand. As the housing/remodeling sector remains in the doldrums, demand is relatively low. There seems little to change the short or medium term outlook.

FRLCO NEWS

Holiday Hours

Front Range Lumber will be closed all day Saturday 12/24/11 and for Christmas. All other store hours remain the same. Have a safe and happy holiday from all of us.

How To Tell A Real Lumberyard

A real lumberyard carries wood up to 20'.

A real lumberyard's staff knows how to read a tape measure.

Special orders aren't a special hassle, but welcomed.

Carries lumber grades for their usefulness, not a grade enabling a low price.

Delivers at a reasonable rate within a same or next day basis.

Helps you load your materials.

Has extensive experience selling materials, not just extensive experience.

Goes by a name, not a employee number.

Carries an extensive inventory – not just the “key” items

Having it!

A common thread we hear from customers is they come to Front Range Lumber because they can't find it elsewhere. Our answer – try us first! We stock hundreds of lumber and building materials items simply not stocked elsewhere. Whether you're looking for better quality, long lengths or odd items –

Front Range Lumber should be your first call to locate what you need.

We be social!

We are using social media!

FOLLOW us on TWITTER:
www.twitter.com/frontrangelumbr

LIKE us on FACEBOOK:
www.facebook.com/frontrangelumberco

KENT'S CORNER

We are all surviving The Great Recession, more or less. In Colorado, most any wholesaler or competitor that we know will disagree that we are not still in a recession. We still hear widely varying reports from contractors on how much work is out there. I am interested in how the times have changed us humans, so I will share some of my observations. Homeowners are interested in incredible deals for cheap. This is hard on everybody. There are hidden ways that manufacturers are cheapening their products to survive, e.g. narrowing their warranty, making their products smaller, or reducing staff. It drives wages down and forces contractors to cut corners. We know one contractor that removed the word “Quality” from his company name as he felt that potential customers would assume his prices would be too high. Many contractors get a job, and since they and their crew have been idle, start the job immediately. Any delays due to weather, special orders, etc. are painful. We hear of many job cancellations, even after homeowners have signed contracts. Oddly, though people are intensely careful about their spending, careful planning is not common. Siding choices many times change after one type has been purchased and delivered. Homeowners often become angry if they have to pay for their own mistakes. Many contractors and homeowners are trying to shift the design portion of jobs to us, because we are “free” and then it is our fault if the material list

is incorrect. PDF's have replaced blueprints, that just a couple of years ago were an automatic part of the deal. This makes it easy for the building owner to transfer any printing prices to bidders.

One profound change that has occurred is that many people's time has lost much of its value. To me this is a disturbing change, as many we meet will get twice as many bids for labor and material, for jobs that they may not even be serious about! This puts pressure on contractors to quote lots of jobs hoping to get a few. It puts pressure on us to split our time between serious business and unprofitable efforts, without appearing rude.

Luckily most of the people we meet are friendly and honest. We appreciate your loyalty; it keeps us here!

TAKING STOCK...

MIRATEC

Front Range Lumber stocks the best quality materials possible. While every board or item cannot be perfect, buying a better quality item pays off for all concerned. An example of this is Miratec trim boards. This is a one piece manufactured product used for exterior trim at doors, windows, corners and so on. It has an extensive warranty. Its workability far outperforms the competition. We had a contractor whose customer insisted upon another brand (will remain unnamed) they had found on the internet. We got the item in and before it could be picked up (and installed) the trim was delaminating and losing its primer coat. The customer eventually switched to Miratec but the job was delayed and cost everyone effort and time. The moral of the story is quality does pay.

4x4

We've received a large shipment of much higher quality 4x4 white fir for

use as posts for whatever your project may be: signs, construction, and temporary posts. These 4x4's have no wane – meaning four full square corners. They are virtually free of heart center, therefore minimizing cracking and cork-screw type warping. All the knots are limited in quantity and size and must be tight in the wood. Don't settle for a poor quality 4x4 when so much better is available.

PRODUCT NEWS

Trex

Trex has made their announcement for their changes to the product line in 2012. First, only very minor increases are made to the pricing across the board, mainly to offset increased shipping costs. Changes have been made to the railing system, making it available in specific pieces, so you avoid the expense of buying kits. They've added a less expensive version of Transcends called "Enhance". This decking product comes in tan (Dune Beach) and grey (Clamshell) colors. Remember the solid 4x4 TrexPost is "officially" discontinued; however, there are supplies still left for purchase for now.

Cedar

We continue to source some of the best cedar we've ever seen. This includes boards, 2x dimensional sizes, timbers and siding products. Don't settle for just "cheap" cedar – it'll just shrink, crack and leave generally poor results. As always, refer to the Western Red Cedar Lumber Association's website for all the information you need regarding cedar products. www.wrcla.org

Milgard

Milgard has introduced a new window line, the "Essence" series. Front Range Lumber is one of the few Metro Dealers authorized to sell this product. This is a fiberglass clad window, with pine, fir or primed pine interior. 15 exterior colors are

available, at no up charge. Innovative tilt latches on double-hungs offer a sleek, clean look. Casement windows up to 36" x 84", double-hungs up to 48" x 96", and sliders up to 96"X72" are available. All the popular hardware finishes are standard. This product offers all the advantages of a fiberglass exterior plus the beauty of wood inside. "Essence" also includes Milgard's lifetime warranty, including the accidental glass breakage warranty. This means that even if the installer damages glass, Milgard will replace it (labor and material) for free!

The minimum overall jamb thickness of this product is 5-1/16", so in some cases this is not considered a replacement window. I have sold 5 houses of this new product, and have heard only positive reviews from the homeowners. We have samples in our showroom and can offer budget pricing anytime. See Kent for details.

Drywall

A HUGE price increase is announced by all the manufacturers, effective in January. Only time will tell whether this increase really sticks, but these suppliers are really against the wall (pun intended). Look for this product to become much more expensive into the new year.

BUILT RIGHT...

Treated Lumber

We've changed the treated 4x4's we stock to a hemlock fir, eased edge product. While these are "incised" (having the little cuts in them to allow the treating solution to penetrate deeper), their appearance overall so vastly improves that we consider it a worth-while tradeoff.

CONSUMER NEWS

Need Christmas Ideas?

As the holidays approach, the giant exporting factories are kicking into high gear to provide Americans with monstrous piles of cheaply produced goods -- merchandise that has been produced elsewhere at the expense of American labor. This year can be different. This year Americans can give the gift of genuine concern for other Americans. There is no longer an excuse that, at gift giving time, nothing can be found that is produced by American hands. Yes, there is!

It's time to think outside the box! Who says a gift needs to fit in a shirt box, wrapped in off-shore produced wrapping paper?

Everyone -- yes EVERYONE gets their hair cut. How about gift certificates from your local American hair salon or barber?

Gym membership? It's appropriate for all ages who are thinking about some health improvement.

Who wouldn't appreciate getting their car detailed? Small, American owned detail shops and car washes would love to sell you a gift certificate or a book of gift certificates.

Are you one of those extravagant givers who think nothing of plonking down the Benjamin's on a foreign-made flat-screen? Perhaps that grateful gift receiver would like his driveway sealed, or lawn mowed for the summer, or driveway plowed all winter, or games at the local golf course.

There are a bazillion owner-run restaurants -- all offering gift certificates. And, if your intended isn't the fancy eatery sort, what about a half dozen breakfasts at the local breakfast joint. Remember, folks this isn't about big National chains -- this is about supporting your home town Americans with their financial lives on the line to keep their doors open.

How many people couldn't use an oil change for their car, truck or motorcycle, done at a shop run by a working American?

Thinking about a heartfelt gift for mom? Mom would LOVE the services of a local cleaning lady for a day.

My computer could use a tune-up, and I know I can find some young guy who is struggling to get his repair business up and running.

OK, you were looking for something more personal. Local crafts people spin their own wool and knit them into scarves. They make jewelry, and pottery and beautiful wooden boxes.

How about going out to see a play or ballet at your hometown theatre?

Musicians need love too, so find a venue showcasing local bands.

Honestly, do you REALLY need to buy another ten thousand lights for the house? When you buy a five dollar string of light, about fifty cents stays in the community. If you have those kinds of bucks to burn, leave the mailman, trash guy or babysitter a nice BIG tip.

Christmas is now about caring about US, encouraging American small businesses to keep plugging away to follow their dreams. And, when we care about other Americans, we care about our communities, and the benefits come back to us in ways we couldn't imagine. This can be the new American Christmas tradition.

FUNNIES

There's a lot more humor in this edition because even if times are tough, there are bright times in life.

Lexophiles

1. A bicycle can't stand alone; it is two tired.
2. A will is a dead giveaway.
3. Time flies like an arrow; fruit flies like a banana.

4. A backward poet writes inverse.
5. In a democracy it's your vote that counts; in feudalism, it's your Count that votes.
6. When a chicken crosses the road, it's poultry in motion.
7. If you don't pay your exorcist you can get repossessed.
8. With her marriage she got a new name and a dress.
9. Show me a piano falling down a mine shaft and I'll show you A-flat miner.
10. When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.
11. The guy who fell onto an upholstery machine was fully recovered.
12. A grenade fell onto a kitchen floor in France resulted in linoleum Blownapart.
13. You are stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.
14. Local Area Network in Australia: The LAN down under.
15. He broke into song because he couldn't find the key.
16. A calendar's days are numbered.
17. A lot of money is tainted: 'Taint yours, and 'taint mine.
18. A boiled egg is hard to beat.
19. He had a photographic memory which was never developed.
20. A plateau is a high form of flattery.
21. When a short fortuneteller escapes from prison look for a small medium at large.
22. Those who get too big for their britches will be exposed in the end.
23. When you've seen one shopping center, you've seen a mall.
24. If you jump off a Paris bridge, you are in Seine.
25. When she saw her first strands of gray hair, she thought she'd dye.
26. Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead to know basis.
27. Santa's helpers are subordinate clauses.
28. Acupuncture: a jab well done.
29. Marathon runners with bad shoes suffer the agony of de feet.
30. The roundest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.
31. I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian.
32. She was only a whisky maker, but he loved her still.
33. A rubber band pistol was confiscated from algebra class because it was a weapon of math disruption.
34. The butcher backed into the meat grinder and got a little behind in his work.
35. No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.
36. A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.
37. Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.
38. A hole has been found in the nudist camp wall. The police are looking into it.
39. Atheism is a non-prophet organization.
40. Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway. One hat said to the other, 'You stay here, I'll go on a head.'
41. I wondered why the baseball kept getting bigger. Then it hit me.
42. A sign on the lawn at a drug rehab center said: 'Keep off the Grass.'
43. A small boy swallowed some coins and was taken to a hospital. When his grandmother telephoned to ask how he was, a nurse said, 'No change yet.'
44. The soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.

45. When cannibals ate a missionary, they got a taste of religion.
46. Don't join dangerous cults: Always practice safe sects.

5 pearls of wisdom to remember.

1. Money cannot buy happiness but somehow, it's more comfortable to cry in a Mercedes Benz than it is on a bicycle.
2. Forgive your enemy but remember the bastard's name.
3. Help a man when he is in trouble and he will remember you when he is in trouble again.
4. Many people are alive only because it's illegal to shoot them.
5. Alcohol does not solve any problem, but then neither does milk.

To Be 8 again!

A man was sitting on the edge of the bed, watching his wife, who was looking at herself in the mirror. Since her birthday was not far off he asked what she'd like to have for her birthday.

'I'd like to be eight again', she replied, still looking in the mirror.

On the morning of her Birthday, he arose early, made her a nice big bowl of Coco Pops, and then took her to Adventure World theme park. What a day! He put her on every ride in the park; the Death Slide, the Wall of Fear, the Screaming Roller Coaster, everything there was.

Five hours later they staggered out of the theme park. Her head was reeling and her stomach felt upside down. He then took her to a McDonald's where he ordered her a Happy Meal with extra fries and a chocolate shake.

Then it was off to a movie, popcorn, a soda pop, and her favorite candy, M&M's. What a fabulous adventure! Finally she wobbled home with her husband and collapsed into bed exhausted.

He leaned over his wife with a big smile and lovingly asked, 'Well Dear, what was it like being eight again?'

Her eyes slowly opened and her expression suddenly changed.

'I meant my dress size, you @*#! idiot!!!!'

The moral of the story: Even when a man is listening, he is gonna get it wrong.

A Trucker's Story

I try not to be biased, but I had my doubts about hiring Stevie. His placement counselor assured me that he would be a good, reliable busboy.

But I had never had an employee with a disability and wasn't sure I wanted one. I wasn't sure how my customers would react to Stevie.

He was short, a little dumpy with the smooth facial features and thick tongued speech of Down's Syndrome. I wasn't worried about most of my trucker customers because truckers don't generally care who buses tables as long as the meatloaf platter is good and the pies are homemade.

The four-wheeler drivers were the ones who concerned me; the mouthy college kids traveling to school; the yuppie snobs who secretly polish their silverware with their napkins for fear of catching some dreaded 'truck stop germ' the pairs of white-shirted business men on expense accounts who think every truck stop waitress wants to be flirted with. I knew those people would be uncomfortable around Stevie so I closely watched him for the first few weeks.

I shouldn't have worried. After the first week, Stevie had my staff wrapped around his stubby little finger, and within a month my truck regulars

had adopted him as their official truck stop mascot.

After that, I really didn't care what the rest of the customers thought of him. He was like a 21-year-old kid in blue jeans and Nikes, eager to laugh and eager to please, but fierce in his attention to his duties. Every salt and pepper shaker was exactly in its place, not a bread crumb or coffee spill was visible when Stevie got done with the table. Our only problem was persuading him to wait to clean a table until after the customers were finished. He would hover in the background, shifting his weight from one foot to the other, scanning the dining room until a table was empty. Then he would scurry to the empty table and carefully bus dishes and glasses onto his cart and meticulously wipe the table up with a practiced flourish of his rag. If he thought a customer was watching, his brow would pucker with added concentration. He took pride in doing his job exactly right, and you had to love how hard he tried to please each and every person he met.

Over time, we learned that he lived with his mother, a widow who was disabled after repeated surgeries for cancer. They lived on their Social Security benefits in public housing two miles from the truck stop. Their social worker, who stopped to check on him every so often, admitted they had fallen between the cracks. Money was tight, and what I paid him was probably the difference between them being able to live together and Stevie being sent to a group home. That's why the restaurant was a gloomy place that morning last August, the first morning in three years that Stevie missed work.

He was at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester getting a new valve or something put in his heart. His social worker said that people with Downs

Syndrome often have heart problems at an early age so this wasn't unexpected, and there was a good chance he would come through the surgery in good shape and be back at work in a few months.

A ripple of excitement ran through the staff later that morning when word came that he was out of surgery, in recovery, and doing fine. Frannie, the head waitress, let out a war whoop and did a little dance in the aisle when she heard the good news.

Marvin Ringers, one of our regular trucker customers, stared at the sight of this 50-year-old grandmother of four doing a victory shimmy beside his table. Frannie blushed, smoothed her apron and shot Marvin a withering look. He grinned. 'OK, Frannie, what was that all about?' he asked. 'We just got word that Stevie is out of surgery and going to be okay.' 'I was wondering where he was. I had a new joke to tell him. What was the surgery about?' Frannie quickly told Marvin and the other two drivers sitting at his booth about Stevie's surgery, then sighed: 'Yeah, I'm glad he is going to be OK,' she said. 'But I don't know how he and his Mom are going to handle all the bills. From what I hear, they're barely getting by as it is.' Marvin nodded thoughtfully, and Frannie hurried off to wait on the rest of her tables. Since I hadn't had time to round up a busboy to replace Stevie and really didn't want to replace him, the girls were busing their own tables that day until we decided what to do.

After the morning rush, Frannie walked into my office. She had a couple of paper napkins in her hand and a funny look on her face.

'What's up?' I asked.

'I didn't get that table where Marvin and his friends were sitting cleared

off after they left, and Pete and Tony were sitting there when I got back to clean it off,' she said. 'This was folded and tucked under a coffee cup'

She handed the napkin to me, and three \$20 bills fell onto my desk when I opened it. On the outside, in big, bold letters, was printed 'Something For Stevie.' 'Pete asked me what that was all about,' she said, 'so I told him about Stevie and his Mom and everything , and Pete looked at Tony and Tony looked at Pete, and they ended up giving me this.' She handed me another paper napkin that had 'Something For Stevie' scrawled on its outside.. Two \$50 bills were tucked within its folds. Frannie looked at me with wet, shiny eyes, shook her head and said simply: 'truckers.'

That was three months ago. Today is Thanksgiving, the first day Stevie is supposed to be back to work. His placement worker said he's been counting the days until the doctor said he could work, and it didn't matter at all that it was a holiday. He called 10 times in the past week, making sure we knew he was coming, fearful that we had forgotten him or that his job was in jeopardy. I arranged to have his mother bring him to work. I then met them in the parking lot and invited them both to celebrate his day back.

Stevie was thinner and paler, but couldn't stop grinning as he pushed through the doors and headed for the back room where his apron and busing cart were waiting. 'Hold up there, Stevie, not so fast,' I said. I took him and his mother by the arms. 'Work can wait for a minute. To celebrate your coming back, breakfast for you and your mother is on me!' I led them toward a large corner booth at the rear of the

room. I could feel and hear the rest of the staff following behind as we marched through the dining room. Glancing over my shoulder, I saw booth after booth of grinning truckers empty and join the procession. We stopped in front of the big table. Its surface was covered with coffee cups, saucers and dinner plates, all sitting slightly crooked on dozens of folded paper napkins. 'First thing you have to do, Stevie, is clean up this mess,' I said. I tried to sound stern.

Stevie looked at me, and then at his mother, then pulled out one of the napkins. It had 'Something for Stevie' printed on the outside. As he picked it up, two \$10 bills fell onto the table.

Stevie stared at the money, then at all the napkins peeking from beneath the tableware, each with his name printed or scrawled on it. I turned to his mother. There was more than \$10,000 in cash and checks on that table all from truckers and trucking companies that heard about your problems.

Well, it got real noisy about that time, with everybody hollering and shouting, and there were a few tears, as well.

But you know what's funny? While everybody else was busy shaking hands and hugging each other, Stevie, with a big smile on his face, was busy clearing all the cups and dishes from the table.

Best worker I ever hired.

Plant a seed and watch it grow.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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