

LBM JOURNAL[®]

JANUARY 2026 | \$15 U.S. | LBMJOURNAL.COM

DEALER OF THE YEAR 2026

CATEGORY: \$100MM+

CARTER LUMBER

**KEY TRENDS DRIVING THE
WEATHERIZATION MARKET**

**READERS SHARE THEIR BUSINESS
CHALLENGES FOR 2026**

**HAMILTON BUILDING SUPPLY'S
FIGHT AGAINST DIABETES**

**NATIONAL LUMBER COMPANY:
A CENTURY OF SERVICE**



JEFF DONLEY, PRESIDENT/COO AND
NEIL SACKETT, CEO/CHAIRMAN OF
CARTER LUMBER

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OF THE YEAR
2026**
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Rick Davis

Reaching Objectivity | P. 18

Rick Davis is the contributing sales editor for *LBM Journal* and regarded by many as the leading sales trainer and consultant in the LBM industry. He has been the owner of Building Leaders, Inc. for 20 years and trained tens of thousands of salespeople in our industry.

Thea Dudley

Finagling Finance Charges | P. 22

Thea Dudley started out working with her subcontractor Dad but quickly realized manual labor wasn't for her. She moved into the power seat—granting credit and collecting money. Over her 30+ year career, she's worked for manufacturers, dealers, and contractors by leading credit teams and improving cash processes.

Bradley Hartmann

Why Sales Managers Who Sell Suppress Team Performance | P. 20

Bradley Hartmann has written 15 books and hosts both "The Construction Leadership", and "The Craft of LBM Sales" podcasts. He advises LBM dealers, distributors, and manufacturers across the country and trains thousands of commercial and residential construction leaders annually through his executive coaching and consulting, online training programs, custom workshops, and keynote speeches.

Russ Kathrein

The "I" in Leadership is a Letter, Not a Person | P. 26

Russ Kathrein is Vice President of Lumber & Building Materials at Do it Best, based in Fort Wayne, IN. He is passionate about the art of leadership and the human element of business. He has successfully led operations by first getting the people part correct and aligning the team, then focusing on fundamentals.

John D. Wagner

Margin Squeeze | P. 24

John D. Wagner is a managing director for 1stWEST Mergers & Acquisitions, which has transacted \$1.5 billion+ in deals with a specialty in distribution and LBM sectors. John is the author of 25 books and 2,600+ articles published in several major outlets. His most popular book is "M&A Basics For People in a (BIG) Hurry!".

Rita Ferris

ABMA Works to Expand Homeownership for First-time Buyers | P. 8

Rita Ferris is president of the Northeastern Retail Lumber Association. In 2021 she helped establish the American Building Materials Alliance representing the LBM industry across 17 states. abmalliance.org

Ronn Levine

Weatherization: Invisible, Essential, Evolving | P. 42

Ronn Levine is an award-winning writer and editor who has covered sports and arts (for *The Washington Post*), architecture and the media. He is publisher of The ArtHouse, a DC group with 14,000 members, and owns two Super Bowl rings from a PR stint at the Washington Redskins.

Christine Williamson

Weatherization: Invisible, Essential, Evolving | P. 42

Christine Williamson is an assistant professor at Virginia Tech, where she teaches building science and construction to architecture students. She graduated from Princeton University and received her master's of architecture from NewSchool of Architecture + Design.

Jamel Love

Featured Photographer

Jamel Love is a Cleveland-based portrait and editorial photographer specializing in clean, modern imagery that highlights people with authenticity and intention. His work blends strong composition, natural direction, and timeless, high-quality production. jamellove.com

LET'S BUILD SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL



Photo ©Bruce Damonte

Premium redwood shines on UC Berkeley campus.

Built on the University of California, Berkeley campus more than 100 years ago, Creekside Center underwent an extensive renovation to become the new home for the university's Disabled Students' Program (DSP). The renovated building is clad in a durable, pre-finished redwood heartwood grade board and batten profile. Help your customers complete their projects with premium redwood boards, pattern stock and timbers. **Let's work together. Let's build something beautiful.**



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Project Case Study

FROM THE PUBLISHER

“Strategy is about making choices, trade-offs; it’s about deliberately choosing to be different.”

— Michael E. Porter, a leading authority on competitive strategy

SINCE LBM JOURNAL stubbornly remains privately held, we don’t report to a board of directors or a corporate mothership. We answer to you, members of the LBM community. In that spirit, I’d like to pull back the curtain and share what we’re doing and where we’re headed.

We launched in 2003 from the ashes of another magazine. With no financial backing, our future was uncertain, so as growth happened, it was organic and unplanned. Now that we’re nearing a quarter-century in business, we’re working with a trusted friend and publishing pro to take the next step beyond entrepreneurial startup. It’s about supporting our strategy with structure.

In many ways, LBM Journal’s journey mirrors that of lumberyards who got their start simply to meet their community’s needs. It’s not about chasing growth. It’s about serving our markets. If we do that well, success happens.

That success is evident with Carter Lumber, recognized in this issue as our 2026 Dealer of the Year for companies with sales of \$100 million-plus. How’s this for an origin story? While looking for work during the Great Depression, W.E. Carter partnered with Neil Jones to buy a local lumberyard that had gone bankrupt. “By the end of the 1930’s, Carter was the sole owner ... Today, Carter Lumber has more than 180 locations across 15 states in the eastern U.S.”

Managing Editor Wendy Sturges does a great job sharing Carter Lumber’s story (p. 28). Since successful companies in the LBM community come in all shapes and sizes, Wendy will profile the other 2026 LBM Dealers of the Year in the next three issues, beginning with Red River Lumber (\$50-\$100MM) in February, Peter Lumber (\$10-\$50MM) in March, and Issaquah Lumber (\$10MM) in April.

Here’s to deliberately choosing to be different, and here’s wishing you and your team an excellent 2026.

— Rick Schumacher
Executive Editor & Publisher



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Rick Schumacher'.

HAVE A QUESTION FOR RICK?
RICK@LBMJOURNAL.COM



CELEBRATING
50
YEARS OF
DMSi

CONGRATULATIONS

from one independent business to another

As DMSi marks 50 years as an **independent software company**, we'd like to celebrate the 2026 Dealers of the Year. Congratulations on your accomplishments - here's to your continued success!

DEALER OF THE YEAR

CATEGORY: \$100MM+
CARTER LUMBER
Kent, OH

CATEGORY: \$50MM-\$100MM
RED RIVER LUMBER
Texarkana, TX

CATEGORY: \$10MM-\$50MM
PETER LUMBER COMPANY
Pleasantville, NJ

CATEGORY: \$10MM
ISSAQUAH LUMBER
Issaquah, WA

LBM JOURNAL[®]
DEALER
OF THE YEAR
2026

ABMA WORKS TO EXPAND HOMEOWNERSHIP FOR FIRST-TIME BUYERS

BY RITA FERRIS

ACROSS THE COUNTRY, there is agreement that the U.S. is facing a serious housing affordability crisis. The average home listing now tops \$400,000, but most first-time buyers can only afford homes priced between \$200,000 and \$250,000. Unfortunately, not enough homes are being built at that level. In the under \$300,000 market, where demand is strongest, there are millions of families ready to buy, yet only a fraction of the homes needed to meet that demand exist.

This is part of the reason why builders are often steered toward higher-end projects because that's where they can recover the rising costs tied to a growing pile of fees, delays, and mandates. But this challenge also presents a tremendous opportunity—to help more families become first-time homebuyers, encourage builders to build, foster suppliers to supply, and strengthen the American economy.

The American Building Materials Alliance (ABMA)—a federal lobbying arm representing the building material supply industry across 17 states—was asked by the White House for ideas to help ease the affordable housing crisis.



ABMA's Legislative Director Francis Palasieski responded with a practical, results-driven proposal. The proposal, titled "Increasing Housing Supply for First-Time Buyers," focuses on two key reforms designed to reduce costs, cut delays, and bring more attainable homes to market.

1. Require a return-on-investment (ROI) review for new mandates

If a state or local government wants to add new building requirements beyond the International Residential Code (IRC) or International Building Code (IBC), they would first need to show through a standardized ROI analysis that the change delivers measurable benefits for homeowners. This ensures that new mandates add real value rather than simply adding cost.

2. Set a cap on permitting, approval, and inspection costs

A national cap of \$30,000 for permitting, approval and inspection costs is also proposed. States and municipalities would still decide how to stay within that limit, but the cap would provide a clear benchmark to help rein in unnecessary costs and delays.

Permitting, inspections, and regulatory fees have become a hidden tax on housing affordability. Every additional \$1,000 added to the price of a home excludes about 106,000 households from qualifying for financing. While luxury buyers can often absorb those costs, they can be devastating for entry-level families.

Local governments can meet the proposed cap through proven efficiency tools such as:

- Inspection "shot clocks" that set firm deadlines
- Self-certification by licensed professionals
- Electronic permitting systems to speed up processing

The goal isn't to cut corners. It's to cut red tape. The proposed reforms protect safety standards, improve efficiency, and—most importantly—helps bring housing to millions of Americans.

At ABMA, we believe that restoring affordability is essential to keeping the American dream alive. With smart reforms and collaboration at every level of government, we can help build and supply the homes that families need. ■

The ABMA represents the collective strength of three associations in 17 states: the Northeastern Retail Lumber Association (NRLA), representing building material suppliers from Maine to Washington, D.C.; the Construction Suppliers Association (CSA), representing building materials suppliers in Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Oklahoma; and the Florida Building Materials Association (FBMA), representing building materials suppliers throughout Florida. To learn more, or to help advance this initiative, log on to: abmalliance.org.

Rita Ferris is president of the Northeastern Retail Lumber Association (NRLA).



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02
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BELLETETES

BY THE YARD

Belletetes announced the opening of its newest location in Brookline, NH. The new location offers a 20,000-sq.-ft. selection of building materials, hardware, tools, home improvement supplies, and customer-focused services. The site also features a 30,000-sq.-ft. drive-thru lumberyard.

Koopman Lumber announced the grand opening of its newest location on the South Shore in Massachusetts following last year's acquisition of Sampson Lumber. The newly-rebranded store features a brand-new showroom shining a spotlight on pro-focused hardware products and tools, as well as new Window & Door and Kitchen & Bath showrooms, and the addition of Benjamin Moore paint.

Ohio-based **Hartville Hardware** is celebrating the grand opening of a new location in Middlefield. The new location, which replaces one of the company's older locations, includes 81,000 square feet of space, with an additional 36,000-sq.-ft. drive-thru lumberyard.

Mead Lumber has announced the opening of its newest location, Mead Lumber of Sioux Falls, which offers a comprehensive selection of contractor-grade materials including lumber, windows, siding, roofing, decking, and more. The new location complements Mead's existing Sioux Falls operations: Component Manufacturing Company (CMC), which produces trusses, wall panels, and floor systems, and Reaves Buildings.



ARNOLD LUMBER COMPANY

Arnold Lumber Company will open its fifth location, an expansive new facility in Attleboro, MA. The 88,000-sq.-ft. indoor space marks a significant step forward in the company's long-term strategic expansion across New England.

Westlake Ace Hardware announced plans to open its first location in Dallas, OR. Westlake Ace recently purchased the 22,000-sq.-ft. store—formerly a Rite Aid Pharmacy—and will remodel it to feature more than 18,000 sq. ft. of retail space. Renovations are scheduled to begin in late 2025, with a soft opening anticipated for spring 2026.



HANCOCK LUMBER

Hancock Lumber's Wolfeboro lumberyard recently completed several exterior renovation projects including an updated warehouse featuring new and additional racking for improved organization and accessibility; improved site work, drainage, and brand-new pavement throughout the entire yard; and five newly constructed lumber trees to better protect and store building materials.

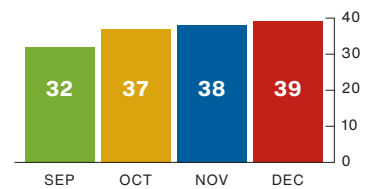
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CO-OP + BUYER'S GROUPS

Do it Best and **True Value** announced a new regional technology center in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, reinforcing its commitment to digital transformation, attracting top-tier talent, and delivering long-term growth. The new tech center is part of the company's broader strategy to expand its capabilities and drive operational excellence across its significantly larger enterprise.

Builder confidence ends 2025 in negative territory

Builder confidence inched higher to end the year but still remains well into negative territory as builders continue to grapple with rising construction costs, tariff and economic uncertainty, and many potential buyers remaining on the sidelines due to affordability concerns. Builder confidence in the market for newly built single-family homes rose one point to 39 in December, according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI). Sentiment levels were below the breakeven point of 50 every month in 2025 and ranged in the high 30s in the final quarter of the year.



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PEOPLE IN LBM

Belletetes has announced that **Sara Belletete** was the recipient of the NHRLA's 2025 Lumber Person of the Year Award. The award recognizes outstanding service, leadership, and dedication to the lumber and building materials industry.



Hancock Lumber announced **Tim Bonenfant** as the newest general manager of the company's Saco operations. With a career rooted in the industry and with deep connections in Maine, Tim brings the right combination of experience, energy, and aligned values to one of Hancock Lumber's largest facilities.



Orgill has appointed **Sharmelee "Sharms" Bala** as its new chief digital and information officer. Bala brings with her more than 20 years of technology and leadership experience from some of the industry's largest retail organizations, including JCPenney, Gap Inc., and Walmart.



Simpson Strong-Tie has hired **Kei Bullock** as its new executive vice president of human resources. In this role, Bullock will lead a globally distributed team of about 90 human resources professionals.



Boise Cascade Company announced that CEO **Nate Jorgensen** plans to retire effective March 2, 2026. The board of directors has unanimously appointed **Jeff Strom**, chief operating officer, to succeed Jorgensen effective March 3, 2026. Jorgensen will continue to serve as a director on the company's board after his retirement.

Weyerhaeuser Company announced the appointment of **Richard "Rick" Beckwitt**, former president, CEO and director of Lennar Corporation, to the company's board of directors.

RoyOMartin announced that longtime Chairman and CEO **Roy O. Martin III** will step back from his role as CEO. Martin will continue to serve as Chairman of the Board of Directors and assume additional responsibilities as Chief Investment Officer. The company's current President and Chief Operating Officer, **E. Scott Poole**, has been appointed CEO, marking the first time a non-Martin family member will lead the organization in its century-long history.



O. MARTIN III



POOLE

Massachusetts-based **Koopman Lumber** announced **Denise Brookhouse** will step into the role of CEO. In turn, **Dirk Koopman** will assume the role of president.



TAL Building Centers announced two key leadership promotions: **Gaven Gregory** has been named chief operating officer, and **Billy Cornelius** has been promoted to vice president of pro sales.



GREGORY



CORNELIUS

MITER Brands announced that **Rod Hershberger**, co-founder of PGT Custom Windows and Doors and current MITER Brands board member, was recognized with the Lifetime Achievement Award from The Argus Foundation.

Benjamin Obdyke has hired **Addie Atkins** for a newly created Market Development Manager position serving Eastern Massachusetts.

Chelsea Building Products has announced the addition of **Brian Degener** as demand creation specialist for its Everlast siding line of products.

Tando Composites has added three new market development managers (MDMs): **John Beran** will cover the Mid-Central region, including Western Pennsylvania and Ohio. **Jared Francke** will support installer and dealer engagement across Michigan. **Taylor Richardson** will cover Tennessee and the surrounding areas. The company also announced the addition of **Devin Brady** as VP of Sales, National Accounts.

INDUSTRY UPDATES

ECI Software Solutions has announced the launch of its ecommerce AI Agent, a built-in AI tool within the company's ecommerce platform, EvolutionX, which also powers its Spruce eCommerce solution. The AI Agent combines intelligence, and real-time insights to help merchants make day-to-day work easier, connect better with customers, and uncover new revenue opportunities—all without complex setup or technical expertise.

MITER Foundation, the charitable arm of MITER Brands, recently announced it raised more than \$5 million in total through its two annual charity golf outings in Hershey, PA, and Scottsdale, AZ. The two events were the largest attended in the foundation's history, with record amounts raised at both.

SEND NEWS AND UPDATES ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION TO WENDY@LBMJOURNAL.COM

MERGERS + ACQUISITIONS

Dakota County Lumber Co. will acquire **Hamel Building Center** located in Plymouth, MN, pending the completion of due diligence. The strategic acquisition significantly expands DCL's footprint, allowing it to better serve builders, remodelers, and contractors across the Twin Cities Metro Area.

Koopman Lumber has announced its plans to acquire **Lyon & Billard**, a building materials supplier with more than 180 years of history serving professional contractors and homeowners in central Connecticut. Lyon & Billard currently operates four Connecticut locations, including Berlin, Cheshire, Meriden, and East Hampton.

Builders FirstSource has acquired **Lengefeld Lumber** in Temple, TX, a fourth-generation, family-owned business serving Central Texas since 1951.

ProTec Panel & Truss announced the acquisition of **Barry County Lumber**, a single-location lumberyard in Hastings, MI. Barry County serves both professional builders and homeowners with products ranging from framing lumber through finished materials and floor coverings.

Great Lakes Ace Hardware has acquired **Macomb Ace Hardware**, located in Macomb Township, MI. Founded in 2007 by Greg Oman, Macomb Ace Hardware has served as a trusted resource for Macomb Township and neighboring communities for more than 18 years.

ABC Supply Co., has acquired the assets of **Roofing Supply-Houston, Inc.** in Houston, TX. This marks ABC Supply's 58th location in the state, further strengthening its support for contractors in the Houston area.

Lezzer Lumber has acquired **H.P. Starr and Brookside Lumber**, a family-owned company serving the greater Pittsburgh region. The addition of these three locations—Bethel Park, Zelienople, and Valencia—strengthens Lezzer Lumber's presence in Western Pennsylvania and enhances service capabilities for professional contractors, remodelers, and DIY customers.

Gold Beach Lumber purchased the business assets and real estate of **Dazey's Hubbards** in Medford, OR. This move marks Gold Beach Lumber's third acquisition this year and will bring the company to 10 locations across Oregon. This expansion will give Gold Beach Lumber a stronger presence in southern Oregon and build on the company's long history of serving both contractors and homeowners across the region.



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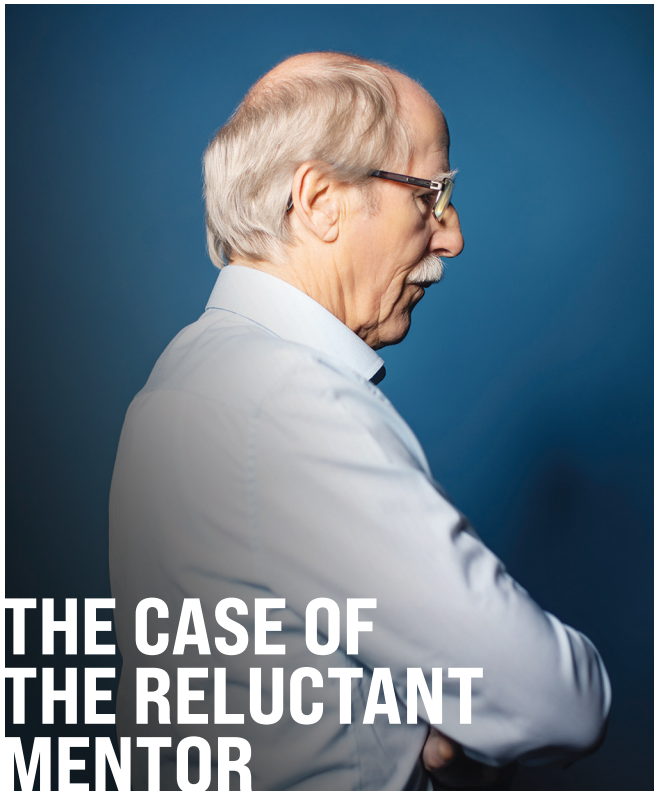
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TOUGH CALL SOLUTIONS

THE OCTOBER 2025 ISSUE SURVEY RESULTS FROM LBMJOURNAL.COM AND LINKEDIN.



Your longtime operations guru, Gus, who's nearing retirement absolutely refuses to share his knowledge with the sharp young pro, Jill, who is under his tutelage. Here's how readers responded.

<p>Reward 44% Tie Gus's pay, perks, or retirement package to his active participation in mentoring young pros. A carrot can be more effective than a stick.</p>	<p>Demand 16% Sit down with Gus and make it clear that knowledge-sharing with the new hire and others on your team is an expectation, not an option. Discuss consequences if he refuses.</p>
<p>Switch 30% Pair Jill with another aging veteran in a different department who is willing to share their knowledge with a young pro just learning the business.</p>	<p>Shadow 10% Encourage Jill to quietly observe Gus's daily work, so she can pick up knowledge without his active participation. Perhaps he will soften up and play along.</p>

WANT TO SEE MORE TOUGH CALLS? CHECK OUT PAGE 56 OF THIS ISSUE, OR FIND MORE AT:
lbmjournal.com/category/tough-call

READER RESPONSES

"This topic is near and dear to me. I am 73, part-time, and joyfully filling a 'mentor' role at our company. Several of my peers have similar roles at their LBM companies. There are several considerations here:

1. Credit to the new management team for early emphasis on mentorship and positive response.
2. Where is Jill on her career path? We don't want her rethinking her decision, we need her to feel supported, at several different areas of her workplace.
3. We want to encourage Gus's 'undisputed expertise on LBM operations' to be focused on operations! Gus can possibly convey his knowledge/experience in other ways (I guess I would select the 'shadowing' option). Instead of frustration with Gus's unwillingness to share his knowledge in the usual ways, management needs to show appreciation for his skills and abilities and find other methods to help newer staff.
4. Lastly: some up and coming workers don't want to learn from Boomers. They think they can figure it out on their own. In many cases they are right, and we don't want their independent mindset to be restricted by 'that's the way we've always done it.'"

— Tom Glauber, Sales Associate, Sherwood Lumber

"I am a 43-year vet with the company I work for and the time of my departure is drawing close! Most corporate companies over the last 10 years continue to cut pay and all parts of incentive programs at their companies. Then at the end of ole Gus's tenure at the company, they see the need to compensate ole Gus to be happy about sharing all the knowledge that he's accumulated for the decades of his career. Gus then feels like the only reason that they want to pay him for his knowledge is so that he can pass it along to the next generation of Jill's. If companies would just realize the value of the Guses that pour their heart, soul, and sometimes their health into their jobs over the lifetime of employment, you would probably have a happy older guy that would be happy to pour his knowledge into the next generation of young people, who will be your next Gus!

But sometimes poor financial decisions made by CFOs and CEOs etc., can damage the health of a company to the point that in their mind the only way to satisfy the books / stock holders is to cut the pay of the ole Guses and Jills. Employees need to be told that their contributions to the company are valued and they should be lifted up in their career. A great employee in my mind is a part of the family and should be treated as such."

— Anonymous

2026 INDUSTRY EVENTS

JAN 19-21

2026 BIZCON NORTH
St. Cloud, MN | bldconnection.org

JAN 22-24

2026 HOUSE-HASSON
WINTER BUYING MARKET
Nashville, TN
househasson.com/markets

JAN 28-30

ALLIED BUILDING STORES
WINTER MARKET
Nashville, TN | alliedstores.com

FEB 3-4

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Altoona, IA | bldconnection.org

FEB 11-12

BMSA ANNUAL LEARNING EXCHANGE
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Orlando, FL | buildersshow.com

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MAR 2-4

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MAR 6-8

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MAR 8-12

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DEALER SHOW
Orlando, FL | cameronashleybp.com

MAR 10-12

LMC ANNUAL 2026
Chicago, IL | lmc.net

MAR 11

IDEAS SHOW
King of Prussia, PA | ideasshow.net

APR 26-29

NEXTGEN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
Kalispell, MT | lbmadvantage.com

SEP 25-28

DO IT BEST & TRUE VALUE
FALL MARKET
Indianapolis, IN | doitbestonline.com

OCT 28-30

LMC EXPO 2026
Philadelphia, PA | lmc.net

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DISTRIBUTION NEWS

Trex Company, Inc. is expanding its relationship with **Specialty Building Products (SBP)** in Michigan. SBP will now provide statewide distribution coverage out of its Jackson and Traverse City Amerhart distribution centers. The company is also expanding its relationship with **Weekes Forest Products**. As part of this collaboration, territories in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and North Dakota will be served out of Weekes' distribution center in St. Paul and Moorhead, MN.

ITC Millwork has expanded its regional presence with a new 32,000-sq.-ft. distribution hub and service center in Garner, NC, strategically positioned to serve Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill, and surrounding communities.

KLAASWOOD has expanded its strategic partnership with **J.M. Thomas Forest Products**. This collaboration will significantly broaden the availability of KLAASWOOD's innovative, chemical-free wood siding, decking, and trim to builders and contractors across a wider geographic footprint.

New Castle Steel announced a strategic distribution partnership with **Weyerhaeuser Company's** distribution business to bring its innovative steel deck framing products to the California and Arizona markets.

RDI Railing and MoistureShield announced that the companies have expanded their distribution partnership with **BlueLinx**, which doubles BlueLinx's RDI Railing distribution footprint from eight to 16 locations and introduces MoistureShield Decking to two new key markets: Long Island, NY and Portland, OR.

James Hardie Building Products Inc. announced an expansion of its product offering with **Boise Cascade Company**. Under a new multi-year agreement, Boise Cascade will now distribute AZEK Exteriors and TimberTech Decking and Railing products in the Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. markets, alongside the full suite of Hardie products.

Capital Lumber has a new partnership with **Huber Engineered Woods**, expanding its product offering across its four California distribution locations and its Salt Lake City, UT location. The company's initial stocking inventory will consist of ZIP System Sheathing, AdvanTech Flooring Sheathing and a full assortment of AdvanTech and ZIP System accessories.

International Wood Products announced a new distribution partnership with **Huber Engineered Woods**. Effective immediately, IWP will distribute the full range of Huber product families throughout Washington, Oregon, the North Coast of California, and the Idaho Panhandle.

Maximo Wood, a brand of GMX, has announced its expansion into Southern California through a new dealer partnership with **Valencia Lumber & Panel**, based in Van Nuys, CA.

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LBM TALKS



Transforming Support Columns and Posts into Statement Pieces: INTRODUCING WESTBURY WRAPS

As outdoor living continues to surge as one of the strongest categories in residential construction, homeowners and professionals alike are looking for ways to elevate the details that complete a deck or porch design. Railings, lighting, and surfaces often get the spotlight, but there is another opportunity to make a visual impact that is frequently overlooked: the support posts and columns that frame the structure.

Launching January 15, Westbury® Wraps deliver a fresh way to upgrade existing support posts and columns with the durability, beauty, and color consistency that define the Westbury brand. Engineered by Digger Specialties Inc. (DSI), Westbury Wraps are purpose-built aluminum staves designed to transform existing support posts or columns into clean, architectural elements that complement Westbury Aluminum Railing and elevate the entire project.



A Smarter, More Stylish Alternative to Traditional Post Enhancements

Traditional post wraps often rely on composite or PVC materials, which can expand, contract, fade, or require ongoing maintenance. Westbury Wraps take a different approach, using high-quality aluminum, a material known for structural stability, long-term performance, and resistance to fading, warping, or cracking.

Because they are fabricated from the same material and finished using the same premium powder coating as Westbury Aluminum Railing, Westbury Wraps offer unmatched consistency in color, sheen, and longevity. For builders, deck professionals, and lumberyards, the ability to offer a perfectly matched post solution eliminates a common challenge when coordinating materials across multiple outdoor components.

Designed for Versatility and Ease of Installation

Westbury Wraps are engineered as an on-site solution to upgrade existing support posts. Each wrap consists of interlocking aluminum staves that simply assemble around a structural post, creating a strong, seamless cladding without the need for additional structural components.

To meet the needs of a wide range of applications, from new deck construction to porch renovations, Westbury Wraps are available in three widths and two heights:

Widths: 4", 6", & 8" | **Heights:** 8½ ft, 10 ft, & 16 ft

This versatility ensures installers can easily fit most common post sizes while maintaining a clean, uniform aesthetic across the entire project.

Coordinated Style in 12 Premium Powder-Coated Colors

One of the biggest advantages of the new Westbury Wraps is the color story they bring to the outdoor living category. DSI's industry-leading powder coating is available in 12 standard Westbury colors, allowing installers and homeowners to create a cohesive, polished look across the entire railing and post system.

From classic Satin Black and White Fine Texture to popular architectural tones like Bronze, Grey, and Speckled Walnut, the color options allow professionals to align with any design preference, whether traditional, modern, or somewhere in between.

This seamless color matching offers retailers and distributors a unique sales advantage: the ability to present a complete, unified Westbury system; railing, support columns, ADA Handrail, and now wraps, with each piece designed and finished to work together.

Complete the Look with Coordinating Cap and Base Sets

To finish the clean, architectural appearance, Westbury Wraps can be paired with matching cap and base sets. These accessories provide the final detail that ties together the railing, wraps, and surrounding structure, giving outdoor spaces an elevated and intentional aesthetic.

The cap and base sets are available in the same 12 standard colors, ensuring a coordinated finish across every visible element.

A Strategic Addition for Dealers and Builders

For lumberyards, building product distributors, and contractors, Westbury Wraps create a significant new opportunity within the outdoor living category. As an add-on product, wraps increase project value without adding complexity. They provide homeowners with a premium look, and builders with a dependable, easy-to-install solution backed by one of the industry's most trusted brands.

Westbury Wraps also strengthen the Westbury ecosystem, giving dealers another profitable product line under a name their customers already associate with quality, innovation, and style.



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WRAPS



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Turn plain support posts into architectural features with Westbury® Wraps. The interlocking aluminum design provides a seamless appearance, while the powder-coated finish, available in all 12 signature DSI colors, offers both elegance and durability. The perfect finishing touch for patios, porches, and under-deck living areas.



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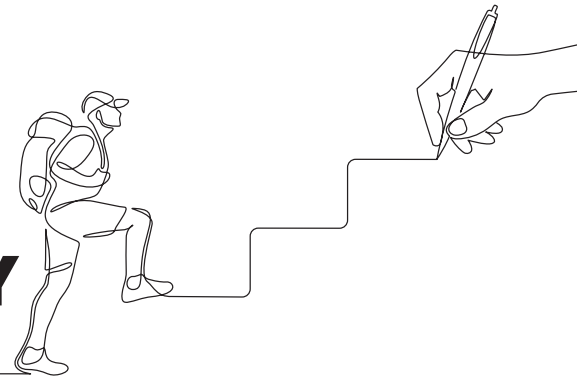


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BY RICK DAVIS

REACHING OBJECTIVITY



LAO TZU, considered the father of Taoist philosophy, is purported to have said, “It is better to know and think you don’t, than not know and think you do.” Of course, that was 2,600 years ago, and we really don’t know if he said it or not. Whoever said it matters less than the sentiment.

It’s how I feel about managers and leaders spouting sales aphorisms, many of which are in conflict with each other. “*We need hunters not farmers!*” vs. “*Salespeople need to plant seeds of growth.*” “*I need salespeople to think outside the box!*” vs. “*We need our salespeople getting back to basics.*” “*So-and-so is just an order-taker.*” vs. “*People do business with people they like.*”

Of course, every one of these statements is correct on some level. However, they are random statements of strategic insight that do little to advance or teach meaningful sales practices. If you want to lead a sales team, then you must define the objective factors that enable you to properly coach and develop sales talent.

Selling is unlike any other aspect of LBM branch leadership because we must account for uncertainty. Inventory management is based on factual observations of shrinkage, cycle counts, turns, and depreciation. Accounting principles are based on the certainty of numbers. Sales measurement must account for the uncertainty of human reaction, which is to say that inanimate objects and numbers don’t have opinions, and they don’t talk back. People do.

As an economics major, I learned much about the uncertainty of outcomes. In fact, recent Nobel prize-winning economists Richard Thaler and Daniel Kahneman outlined new theories on the psychology of decision-making. Their theories—along with the profound insights of Amos Tversky, who died before the Nobel was given to his partners—in behavioral economics illustrated the irrationality of human economic decision making.

For example, Thaler noted that a person will drive across town to save 50% on a toaster oven that retails for \$60. That same person will not make the same drive to save \$30 on a \$1,500 tractor lawn mower, an identical savings with a much different rationale. Kahneman proved that the insights of professional investors (yes, the ones managing your 401K portfolios) are no more rational than the average investor.

So, what does this have to do with sales economics and leadership of salespeople? A lot! During my 40-year career, mostly criticizing myself and allowing for constant doubt of my own theories, I’ve landed on two theories of objectivity that are difficult to refute: there are objective measurements for *macrosales* outcomes and *microsales* performance.

The first, *macrosales*, refers to the larger picture of sales performance. The measurements include values for closing ratios, objective definitions of prospecting, and prospect valuation.

Closing ratios, for example, would seemingly be as simple as measuring the value for a list of bids and corresponding outcomes, which is not so. One bid might be blindly offered before a conversation with the prospect, thus making the likelihood of success almost zero. Another bid might be more vetted, thus offering for a predictable closing ratio. Yet a third might be for a builder who is seeking a price for the initial house of many to be built during the year, thus implying that an annualized value for the lead should be calculated. Proper closing ratio measurements are obtainable, but only when objective valuation criteria are applied.

The same objectivity can be applied to short-term sales performance during individual sales calls. The best example of this is an appointment as a differentiator in an industry in which cold calls to jobsites and customer offices are considered acceptable. Cold calls are non-productive interruptions where meaningful dialogue is difficult. Appointments, on the other hand, mean that a client or prospect will allocate time, engage in meaningful dialogue, and maximize the value of the salesperson’s time in the field.

Aphorisms are true, but are not really a way to manage sales performance. The only way for a manager to know if a salesperson is doing a good job and, more importantly, provide constructive feedback, is by benchmarking objective standards of performance. You can claim to know ... but it’s better to look and measure.

Rick Davis is the Sales Education Leader for ABC Supply and the President of Building Leaders. You can buy his books or learn more about his online sales training platform at buildingleaders.com.



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BY BRADLEY HARTMANN

THE JERRY JONES PROBLEM

WHY SALES MANAGERS WHO SELL SUPPRESS TEAM PERFORMANCE

JERRY JONES ISN'T A cowboy; he's a salesman. He's a dealmaker, a gambler, and a showman. He's the only NFL owner with a weekly radio show—just one aspect of his omnichannel approach to staying in the spotlight. As he once put it: “The Cowboys are a soap opera 365 days a year. When it gets slow, I stir it up ... that controversy is good.”

If that's the scoreboard, Jerry Jones is winning. The Dallas Cowboys are the world's most successful sales and marketing machine.

He's also the only owner in major American sports who hired himself as general manager. As a GM, Jones' Cowboys are the only team in the NFC to have failed to make a conference championship game in the new century. His competing priorities—the oil and gas entrepreneur; the NFL owner; the NFL GM—are hard to miss. In October, Jones spoke to *The Wall Street Journal* about the value of natural gas. “There's \$100 billion present value with gas out there. That's why I'm talking to you on the telephone rather than trying to fix our defense with the Dallas Cowboys.”

And that's the point. Jerry is selling when he should be managing—just like many LBM sales managers who still sell on the side. It's a recipe for underperformance. Here are three reasons why:

1. Two full-time jobs, one person

Every salesperson allocates their time across four buckets:

- **Selling:** Putting themselves in a position to hear “no”
- **Account management:** Maintaining existing customers
- **Customer service:** Problem-solving
- **ATOS:** All The Other Stuff

This is where most sales reps fail, spending far too little time actually selling. But a sales manager who also sells must make all four choices for themselves—and for every rep they oversee.

Bradley Hartmann was raised in a lumberyard, worked in area purchasing at PulteGroup, and is passionate about helping LBM sales teams make it easy for builders to buy. You can email him at bradley@bradleyhartmannandco.com.

Suppose sales are down. Should the manager start dialing for dollars? Or diagnose why reps are underperforming and coach them up? A dual-role leader risks becoming a distracted player and a mediocre coach. And if the sales manager isn't coaching and holding reps accountable ... who is?

2. Misaligned incentives

When sales managers can sell, commissions (as they're designed to do) nudge the managers toward selling. And calling on bourbon-drinking buddies is fun. These incentives keep managers thinking about “my accounts” instead of “my reps.”

Meanwhile, those reps wander around hungry for new ideas, coaching, and accountability.

Jerry can always justify selling because it grows the brand. But “growing the brand” and “building the roster” pull in different directions.

3. Mistrust & cultural friction

Externally, the customer is the hero. Internally, the roles should be equally clear: The sales rep is the Hero. The sales manager is the Guide. When the guide also plays the hero, reps wonder:

- “Am I competing with my boss for leads?”
- “Is my boss removing roadblocks—or creating them?”

What LBM leaders should do instead

Separate the roles to eliminate conflict.

- **Sales reps** should focus on prospecting for new business, selling new product categories into existing accounts, and maintaining current lines of business.
- **Sales managers** should focus on coaching, skill development, and driving accountability.

What's your number 1 goal?

Is your goal to build the most valuable franchise in the world? If so, Jerry is succeeding. But what if the goal is winning a Super Bowl? *Dallas ... we have a problem.*

Jerry insists he can be both owner and GM, just like some LBM pros insist they can sell and manage. But if you want to build a team that wins new sales consistently in a soft market the smart money says sales managers should stop calling their own plays and start coaching the reps who actually run them.



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BY THEA DUDLEY

FINAGLING FINANCE CHARGES

Hi Thea,

I have some thoughts on your column relating to finance charges (To Charge or Not to Charge, Aug. 4, 2025). Prior to my current role as credit manager for a regional family-owned building material supplier, I originated construction loans for a community bank where earning interest on money we loaned was our core business. I have often said as credit manager, “the time/value of money concept is ageless,” dating back to the days when Barney Rubble took out a business loan with the Granite State Bank and he paid it back in principal and interest.

Most real estate secured construction loans are not closed for 100% of the cost of the project but commonly funded at 80-90% of cost. This requires some equity or capital infusion. There can be more than one lender on the project commonly referred to as: primary and secondary lenders. Add in the fact that construction draws from the primary lender are funded upon completion of each project phase. This requires the materials be delivered in advance of the draw funding to complete the actual construction services. Often the material invoices come due before the bank completes their inspection due diligence prior to releasing the draw.

Many contractors and property owners lack sufficient free cash to pay material invoices that are due ahead of the draw funding and wait on the bank for the funds to pay the material invoices. In this situation, the contractor and homeowner are relying on the material supplier to be a quasi-secondary lender to their project. Our company philosophy is that we are not and do not want to be a bank for our customers' projects, but for a core group of repeat, long-term, low-risk customers, and consumers with accounts at our firm to build residences, we can accommodate this funding delay by accessing finance charges on the past-due invoice balance. Most understand that our finance charges as both parties (we and them) agree—they would pay the

invoices to us on time if not for the delay caused by their banks' draw process.

The math on the accessed finance charge is quite favorable for consideration as our system calculates interest on the balance at a rate of 18% APR. This is much higher than our clients can get on a signature loan with their bank, but most elect to delay our payment on the balance rather than go to the bank or utilize other funds to pay the past-due invoices. The spread on most bank loans from cost of funds to loan rate is 4-8% depending on credit risk. Our finance charge spread is approximately 12%, assuming a 6% cost of funds. The finance charges collected become an additional revenue stream for our business and the credit department and can accrue consistently on most projects involving traditional bank financing. They also increase gross profit on the project/job by 1-3% in general.

I have often said as credit manager, “the time/value of money concept is ageless,” dating back to the days when Barney Rubble took out a business loan with the Granite State Bank and he paid it back in principal and interest.

We are upfront about charging interest on balances not paid by the finance charge date. We even changed from “Service Charges” to “Finance Charges.” Of course, we write adjustments on some finance charges for things common to our industry, such as lost payments, product defects, and customer relationship preservation. The key to success in our market with finance charges is to: be fair, know your customer and their client, protect your lien rights, and notify all parties involved of charges accessed by producing invoices for the finance charges detailing items where they were accessed.

— Credit Manager, Down South Lumber LLC

Dear Southern Lumber,
If common sense ruled the world, you would be king!
Simply put: understanding where your food comes from (i.e. how the chain of money works) makes it easier to have conversations about money and who is carrying who. Keep those pearls of wisdom coming, my brilliant Southern friend.

With more than 30 years of credit management experience in the LBM industry, Thea Dudley consults with companies on a wide range of credit and financial management issues. Contact Thea at theadudley@charter.net.

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BY JOHN D. WAGNER

IN A RECENT Q&A on an LBM Journal webinar, I was asked how dealers can avoid “margin squeeze.” Especially for wood products, margins seemed manageable in early 2025. TradingEconomics.com pegged the trading band for Q1 as \$505 to \$540 per 1,000 board feet. But recently lumber prices have whipped up and down, responding to cooling housing demand, interest rates, tariffs, and trade uncertainty.

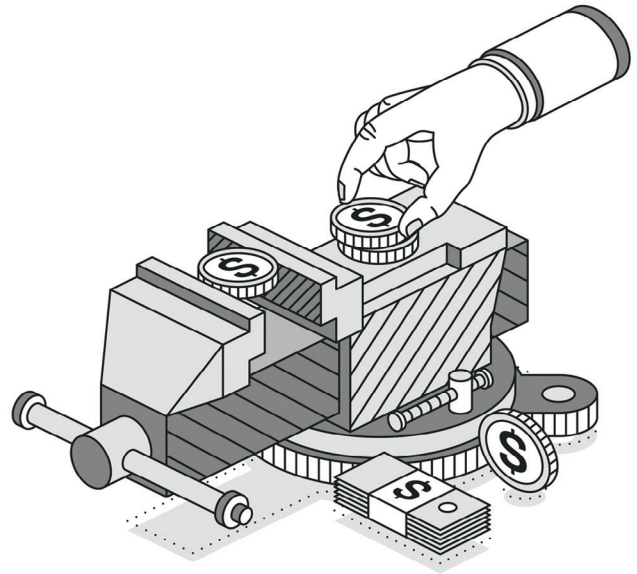
As of this writing, the lumber price trajectory since mid-summer—falling roughly 23% in futures—has left many yards in a margin squeeze between devalued inventory, shrinking replacement costs, and retail prices. In other words, they are selling lumber at a cost basis higher than today’s replacement costs, and the retail price they are “forced” to sell at (perhaps due to a lower prices at a competitor’s locations) reflects more recent lumber spot-prices. There are at least three reasons for this:

MARGIN SQUEEZE

1. We all see price volatility in lumber markets. After hitting \$540/k/bf to start the year, prices spiked to \$700 in August, a 30% rise. As I write this, prices sit at \$585. If dealers have set their retail pricing to the current lumber prices, dealers who stocked up over the summer may now hold high-cost inventory that must compete with falling spot-market prices. Each retail price cut (relative to higher historical COGS) to move the material directly translates into lost gross profit margin, because your COGS basis was so high.

2. Demand is weaker. September 2025 building permit data fell to its lowest since mid-2020; and housing starts are off nearly 9% from spring. Higher borrowing rates give homebuyers pause; ditto for remodeling projects.

3. Erratic trade policies distort cost structures. The U.S. maintains tariffs of about 14.5% on Canadian softwood imports, but the White House may very well raise that figure to 34% in late 2025. The response from the mills? *Curtailing output.* In September, Interfor announced production cuts of 145 million board feet between September and December 2025, constraining supply just as demand softens. With



weekly price swings reaching 5-10 times normal volatility during parts of the year, dealers who monitor COGS daily (a recommended practice!) may want to consider shorter *quote validity periods*, shrinking them from 30 days to seven. That said, contractors who are wary of committing too early to the lumber portion of their purchases may delay purchases, forcing dealers to forecast demand on even thinner order books. The result is heightened exposure to the dealer: If the market drops, so do margins and inventory values, because the dealer has not pushed through the COGS they paid when purchasing that portion of their inventory. This is an almost impossible task, given that contractors are probably just as aware as dealers on recent pricing.

Of course, with COGS being central to this price dynamic, this volatility has a direct effect on your gross profit margins. A board bought at \$650 and resold at \$600 represents at least a 7.7% loss. Meanwhile, other costs may also be elevated, offering little relief on the expense side.

What’s a dealer to do?

- First, tighten inventory discipline. The recent markets underscore the importance of *disciplined inventory turns*.
- Second, resist the temptation to overstock, even for what looks like bargains. Instead, focus on high-velocity SKUs, and use just-in-time restocking agreements with trusted suppliers. (Some public lumber producers report operating at only 50-60% capacity to draw down stockpiles—an approach you may want to adopt, but it risks stockouts.)
- Third, shorten quotes and use *price escalators*, e.g. contract clauses that automatically adjust the sale price of lumber based on changing COGs.
- Fourth, limit quote validity durations to one week, or even tie pricing to daily spot markets.

Finally, longer term, diversify the mix. Dealers who are overly reliant on framing lumber should expand product categories such as decking composites, siding, windows, millwork, or engineered wood. These carry both higher margins, offering balance against commodity lumber.

John D. Wagner is a managing director at 1stWest Mergers & Acquisitions, which offers a specialty practice in the LBM sector. j.wagner@1stwestma.com.

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BY RUSS KATHREIN

ONE OF THE SIMPLEST ways to tell whether someone is a leader or a manager is to listen to how they talk. In challenging times, especially, leaders speak in terms of “we,” while managers default to “I.” The difference may seem small, but the message it sends to a team could not be larger.

When a leader says “we,” it signals unity, shared purpose, and accountability. It tells the team, we’re in this together. When a manager says “I,” it communicates separation. “I” puts the speaker above or apart from the group and suggests their main concern is personal reputation rather than collective success. The language we choose reflects our mindset, and over time, it shapes how others see our leadership.

THE “I” IN LEADERSHIP IS A LETTER, NOT A PERSON

I had a boss who I really enjoyed working with, except when there was a crisis. When things were not going well, he reverted to his “I’m the manager” mode and started saying things like, “I want to know what you are going to do about this,” or “I allowed you to do this, now you need to tell me why it is not working.” We realized he was not in the boat with us; he was standing on the shore, shouting instructions.

Contrast that with a leader who says, “We need to figure this out,” or “Let’s see what we can do differently.” The problem may be the same, but the tone is entirely different. One isolates, the other unites. People will work harder, take more ownership, and go further for a leader who is rowing alongside them rather than pointing from the dock.

Effective leaders understand that success and failure belong to the team. When things go well, they highlight the group’s effort. When things go wrong, they take accountability and focus on solutions. Managers, on the other hand, are often more worried about how they look to their boss or

their peers. They use “I” because they believe leadership is about control and credit. True leaders know it is about service and accountability.

The words we use also set the culture of our teams. “We” leaders build trust, encourage collaboration, and create an atmosphere where people feel valued. “I” leaders breed competition, caution, and distance. Over time, teams mirror the language of their leader. If the leader talks in terms of “we,” people begin to think in those terms as well.

Another powerful distinction between “I” and “we” leaders shows up in how they handle recognition. A manager will say, “I made sure this project got done,” while a leader will say, “Our team did an incredible job pulling this off.” The truth is, no one succeeds alone. Leaders who speak in terms of “we” demonstrate humility and an understanding that their role is to elevate others, not themselves.

In challenging times, that humility becomes the foundation of resilience. When the team hears “we will find a way through this,” it reminds them that they are not alone in the struggle. Everyone feels ownership of the outcome. When they hear “I will take care of it,” the rest of the team steps back and disengages. Intentional or not, “I” language takes the air out of teamwork.

As leaders, we should also recognize how our choice of words influences engagement. “We” invites collaboration. People are more likely to speak up, contribute ideas, and take initiative when they feel part of something larger. “I” shuts that down by implying decisions are already made.

The best leaders speak and act as part of the team, not above it. They do not separate their success from the group’s.

["I"] isolates, ["we"] unites. People will work harder, take more ownership, and go further for a leader who is rowing alongside them rather than pointing from the dock.

The one time it is appropriate for a leader to invoke “I” is when things do not work out and you want to focus the team on finding a solution rather than looking backward to cast blame. Harry Truman had a sign on his desk that said, “The buck stops here.” A good leader will shoulder the blame, relieving the team of that burden so they can move forward with clarity and purpose.

In the end, the true measure of a leader is not found in how often they say “I,” but in how naturally they say “we.” The “I” in leadership should remain just a letter, because when it becomes a person, the team loses its leader.

Russ Kathrein is the Vice President of Lumber & Building Materials at Do it Best based in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

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LBM JOURNAL'S DEALER OF THE YEAR AWARDS, sponsored by DMSi, recognize LBM companies of different sizes that epitomize the entrepreneurial spirit. By our definition, a Dealer of the Year describes a company in which leadership excels at identifying underserved—or emerging—markets, satisfying customers, and constantly working to grow and improve business. While these companies represent vastly different operations, the common thread is their fierce commitment to finding ever-better ways to serve their customers and their communities.

BY WENDY STURGES

In a time when big-box stores and online retailers are pushing customer and employee experience aside while prioritizing profit, it's rare to find a large business that's kept true to its small-business roots. Luckily, Carter Lumber has found the key to stable growth while keeping people at the heart of the company.

Founded by W.E. Carter in the midst of the Great Depression in 1932, Carter Lumber began its story as Carter-Jones Lumber in Akron, OH. While looking for work, Carter traveled from Arkansas to Ohio before partnering with Neil Jones to purchase a local lumberyard that had gone bankrupt.

By the end of the 1930's, Carter was the sole owner, and from that one location, the company has vastly expanded over its 90-year history. Today, Carter Lumber has more than 180 locations across 15 states in the eastern U.S.

Carter Lumber's leadership team—CEO and Chairman Neil Sackett, President and COO Jeff

Donley, Senior Vice President Steve Miller, and Senior Vice President Adam Lombard—attribute the company's continued success over the decades to one of the core values the company was founded on: how it treats its people.

"What's made the biggest difference for Carter Lumber is that while our business has changed, at our core we haven't changed," Sackett said. "Many years ago, we set forth on a plan to be the best building materials supplier in every market that we service. The foundation of that plan is our employees. We treat them well and make sure they have all the tools to succeed. With our customers, we seek out those whose values align with ours, form real relationships with the people there, and do everything we can to be a true partner in their business. If our people are happy and our customers are happy, the results will follow. We've grown significantly since we started down this path, and we believe that staying true to who we are and that is what makes Carter Lumber a special company." ▶



PHOTO COURTESY OF CARTER LUMBER

Investing in opportunity

In addition to the company's lumberyard growth, Carter Lumber has also diversified to other areas in the industry, including millwork, installed services, and manufacturing. The company currently operates 15 truss manufacturing plants, 13 door plants, and a custom millwork facility.

Carter Lumber has also added installed sales in its service areas, which has become a fast-growing part of the company's overall revenue, and now represents approximately 20% of the business. Carter's leadership team said that, at that volume, it is essentially operating a construction company within its existing business. Miller said that the key to being able to diversify its offerings was having experts in each of those areas to build them up.

"What matters just as much as the products and services we offer is having the right people in the field to manage them. We've built a team of product specialists whose entire focus is a single category or service," Miller said. "That includes millwork specialists, kitchen and bath designers, window specialists, exterior portfolio

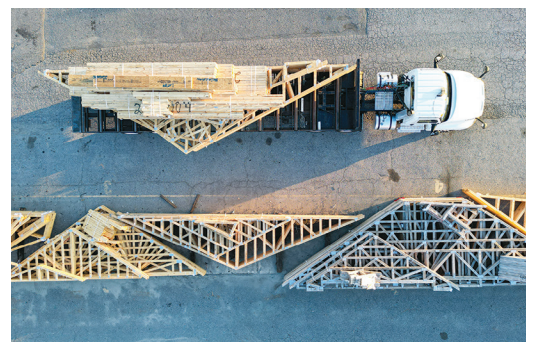
specialists, component specialists, and plenty more. They know the work, and they show up prepared. When they meet with a customer to review a project, it gives the customer real confidence that the details are in the hands of someone who actually specializes in these products and projects. At this point, it's common for an initial meeting to include multiple Carter team members, each bringing their own expertise to the table."

In addition to a wide array of offerings, the company has also invested in expansion for the company's future. The company has made moves toward growth recently, utilizing a three-prong approach: greenfielding, acquisitions, and continued investments in current markets.

However, company leadership said its acquisition approach is anything but hasty, and the company plans to continue that strategy into its second century of operations.

"Solid, steady growth. That's what we've done for the last 25 years, and that's what we plan to do for the next 25 years and beyond," Sackett said.

Carter Lumber has also added installed sales which has become a fast-growing part of the company's overall revenue, and now represents approximately 20% of the business. Carter's leadership team said that, at that volume, it is essentially operating a construction company within its business.



In the past two years, Carter Lumber has announced two major acquisitions: Townsend Building Supply in 2024 and Harvey Lumber in 2025.

“Both presented unique opportunities to grow our footprint in areas where we previously did not operate but had significant interest from customers looking for an alternative to their suppliers in those markets,” Lombard said. “Interestingly, those purchases have created an influx of family-owned businesses reaching out to us to talk about other opportunities for expansion and we are having those conversations today.”

However, Miller said that new yards are not the only source of the company’s growth, particularly as it continues to make improvements to existing locations.

“Just as important as adding new locations is investing in the ones we already have. We have made significant investments into expanding our capabilities so we can serve long-standing customers at a higher level,” he said. “This isn’t a box to check. It’s a commitment to the people and markets that have trusted us for years, and it’s how we make sure they have the resources they need to keep growing.”

People make the difference

In every aspect of the Carter Lumber operation, the leadership team reiterated that everything comes back to its employees.

“Over the years, we have brought on hundreds of quality people that worked for our competition, and yet, we’ve lost very few,” Donley said. “To us, that speaks volumes. We provide employees with a solid work environment, fair compensation, the freedom to let them do what they’re best at, and a company of which they can be proud to work for. We don’t need to have a VP of Culture to make sure we’re doing those things, for us, it’s just who we are as a company. It’s at the foundation of everything we do.”

That, combined with training that allows new employees to travel and shadow other staff in their role, has allowed the company to attract the next generation of LBM pros. Lombard said the company’s corporate team takes an active role in onboarding and retention.

“New employees tell us the same thing once they’re on our team. They’re surprised that our corporate office is actually here to help them. They’re not used to that,” Lombard said. “In most companies, corporate sits above the field and calls the shots. Our corporate teams



see themselves as part of the location’s teams and work hand-in-hand to service our customers. When the field needs something, corporate leans in, not down. For a new employee, that changes the whole feel of the company. It makes us more connected, more responsive, and more focused on being successful together.” ■

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CARTER LUMBER



GET TO KNOW CARTER LUMBER

FOUNDED:	1932
LOCATIONS:	186
EMPLOYEES:	Approx. 5,000
CUSTOMER BASE:	93% Pro / 7% Retail/DIY
OWNERSHIP:	Privately held by family and employees
PRIMARY BUSINESS:	Proprietary company system
PRIMARY CO-OP/ BUYING GROUP:	Orgill

LINDSEY DiGANGI

Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual Insurance Company

Lindsey DiGangi is the vice president of field operations and marketing at Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual Insurance Company (PLM). She oversees PLM's field operations and marketing departments, where she leads the company's new initiatives, helping to maintain and grow its presence as the leading partner for insurance in the lumber and building materials industries.



When it comes to insurance for LBM dealers, what do you consider to be the single most important factor lumber dealers should pay attention to?

The most important factor in your insurance renewal is you. And specifically, your commitment to risk management.

The underwriting process in insurance is meant to qualify and price risks based off application information, as well as physical review of the operations and conversations with insurance buyers. One judgment factor in that analysis is called "management attitude." An insurance carrier is looking to understand if a business owner recognizes, appreciates, and manages the risks of their organization.

Gone are the days of "I have insurance for that" as your sole risk management technique. As business owners, it's critical that you are creating a culture of safety within your organization. Minimizing losses by creating and following best practices from a safety standpoint help demonstrate your commitment. Don't think of your insurance renewal as a single, annual transaction. Instead, think about it as a part of your everyday decision-making.

For LBM dealers looking at increasing their marketing efforts, what are some first steps they can take?

The first step is understanding who your customers are or who you would like your customers to be. You need to meet them where they are in your marketing. It's also important to collect as much information about them as possible so you can tailor your marketing approach and messaging.

Additionally, it's important to have a web presence. It can tell a potential client plenty about your organization. Spending a little time and money on search engine optimization can help you appear at the top of the common search results that your ideal customer is seeking. Create a unique voice for the company and be consistent with it across all your marketing. It takes upwards of seven times for someone to remember who you are.

Is there an often-overlooked aspect of insurance that LBM dealers should pay attention to?

LBM dealers are operating in an increasingly litigious environment where social inflation, litigation funding, and nuclear verdicts are becoming more regular and it's critical that business owners understand their risks.

The importance of contracts and risk transfer is an area that we continue to see overlooked. Every contract you sign, from working with subcontractors to bringing in vendors at your own business, is a potential liability. Contracts should be carefully drafted and reviewed by counsel to help safeguard your projects, reduce exposure to unexpected liabilities, and foster a culture of accountability.

When drafting a contract, make sure to prioritize risk transfer mechanisms, including indemnity clauses, insurance requirements, warranties, and guarantees and compliance with laws and safety standards. If you're signing a contract, make sure you know what rights you are giving up.

The statute of limitations for submitting claims is typically two years and sometimes longer. That means, in many cases, that your contracts are active long after your projects are over. Make sure that your contracts are filed appropriately so they can be found if needed.

What steps can an LBM dealer take to help minimize loss?

LBM leaders can help minimize losses by doing their part to create and cultivate a strong safety culture at their organization. Creating and implementing safety protocols, standard operating procedures and best practices is a good start but it's not enough.

Having a strong training program is also critical for both new hires and your existing staff. Retraining consistently can help reduce bad habits. As a leader, you also need to model the behaviors you expect to see from your staff. That means walking the floor and the yard on a regular basis. If you see something out of place, fix it right then. If you see a forklift driver not following protocol, correct them on the spot. A strong safety culture also means empowering your people to speak up if they see something wrong or unsafe.

What growth initiatives should LBM dealers implement to build better customer loyalty?

Customer loyalty takes a long time to build and, unfortunately, is easy to lose.

Consistency is critical. Your brand is only as strong as your last interaction. If a customer can't rely on a consistently positive experience, it will be harder to build their loyalty. If you have multiple locations, it's important that the experience is consistent across them all. Setting measurable service standards can help drive success in this area. ■

NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN!

LBM JOURNAL[®] 40 UNDER 40 CLASS OF 2026

CELEBRATING YOUNG LEADERS

The LBM Journal 40 Under 40 is a yearly list of 40 pros who have achieved success in the lumber/building material industry before turning 40. This program recognizes and celebrates the growing class of strong, young leaders in the LBM community, and provides them with a space to share ideas, build relationships, and grow in their professional roles.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Employees or owners of a lumberyard, specialty dealer/distributor, wholesale distributor, manufacturer, or service provider who are over 20 years old and under 40 years of age during the 2026 calendar year.

THROW YOUR HAT IN THE RING

If this sounds like you, nominate yourself. We encourage self-nominations, and would love the opportunity to recognize you.

NOMINATE A COLLEAGUE

If you know of someone—be it a fellow teammate, a manager, or owner—deserving of this recognition, nominate them, and we'll take it from there. The process only takes a couple of minutes.

NO COST TO ENTER

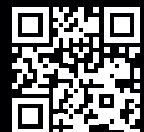
Nominations Close **02/10/26**



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MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY**

For a nomination form visit:
40under40.lbmjournal.com



NATIONAL LUMBER COMPANY

ESTABLISHED: 1919

We spoke with Neal Fruman, co-owner of National Lumber Company headquartered in Mansfield, MA, about the company's longevity and growth.

What was the company's early history like?

National Lumber was founded in 1919 by our great-great-grandfather, Alexander Fruman, a carpenter by trade who immigrated to Baltimore in the early 1900s. He saw a growing need for high-quality custom window and door sashes and began building them by hand in a small workshop in East Baltimore with his sons, Isadore and Phillip. From those early days, the business was defined by craftsmanship, relationships, and reliability—values that have guided every generation since. As the company grew, so did its reach, expanding from a small family shop to a full-service lumber and building materials supplier serving contractors, builders, and homeowners across the region.

What keeps the company going after so many years?

We've remained an independent, family-owned business for more than a century by focusing on people—our customers, our employees, and our community. Every generation has found ways to adapt without losing sight of what makes National Lumber special: personal service, deep product knowledge, and genuine care for the success of the builders and remodelers we serve. In an industry increasingly dominated by large corporations, our independence allows us to stay nimble and local, making decisions that put relationships first. Many of our customers have worked with us for decades, and that trust means everything.

What do you see in the future for the company?

Our future builds on our legacy of service and growth. In recent years, we've expanded into new markets with the launch of our Multi-Family Supply division and the acquisition of Fisher Lumber in Rockville, MD—now part of the National Lumber family. We're continuing to invest in our people, our facilities, and our partnerships to serve builders and developers throughout the Mid-Atlantic. Even as we grow, the heart of our business remains the same: doing right by our customers and our community, just as our family has for more than 100 years. ■

A CENTURY OF SERVICE



Co-owners Kevin Fruman (L) and Neal Fruman (R) of National Lumber Company.



LBM Century Club honors 100-year-old businesses

The LBM Century Club was founded on the simple belief that companies that have been around for 100 years deserve to be recognized. Launched in 2016, the LBM Century Club has grown to over 224 members, with more coming in each month. In all, the companies have provided 28,305 years of combined service to their communities.

By no means does the LBM Journal's Century Club list include every 100-year-old company ... at least not yet. That's where you come in. Do you work for, or know of a lumberyard or building materials retailer that is 100 or more years old? Send them our way, so that we can give them the recognition they deserve. Century Club members receive a certificate for their store, window decals for their front doors, free admission to the LBM Strategies Conference where they are guests of honor at a Century Club induction ceremony, as well as recognition in their local media, all free of charge.

The most recent inductees into this exclusive club include:

CHRISTENSEN LUMBER CO. Fremont, NE	est. 1923	ISSAQUAH LUMBER Issaquah, WA	est. 1889
CAROLINA LUMBER & SUPPLY COMPANY Atlanta, GA	est. 1900	SCHOLL LUMBER Houston, TX	est. 1845
LEARNED LUMBER Hermosa Beach, CA	est. 1924	DELAWARE COUNTY SUPPLY COMPANY, INC. Boothwyn, PA	est. 1924
CLARKS LUMBER Herington, KS	est. 1925	GEORGE M HALL LUMBER West Homestead, PA	est. 1893
ORGAIN BUILDING SUPPLY Clarksville, TN	est. 1921	SAN ANTONIO LUMBER COMPANY San Antonio, FL	est. 1923

Nominate a company for the LBM Century Club

lbmjournal.com/nominate

For a complete listing of LBM Century Club members, visit lbmjournal.com/lbm-century-club.

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Each November, Hamilton Building Supply hosts a fundraiser to support Type 1 Diabetes research. President and CEO John Perna's mother, Susan, and son, Jace, (left, center) as well as employee Keelan Brush (right) have all been diagnosed with diabetes.

Hamilton Building Supply Raises Funds for Type 1 Diabetes Research

BY WENDY STURGES

AFTER FOUR YEARS OF FUNDRAISING, Hamilton Building Supply has reached a momentous goal: over \$162,000 raised for Type 1 Diabetes research.

The Hamilton, NJ lumberyard hosts an annual fundraiser in November to raise money for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, now known as Breakthrough T1D. Hamilton Building Supply matches each dollar raised during the campaign.

Hamilton Building Supply President and CEO John Perna said the company was looking to give back to the community in a focused way that would do the most good.

“The impetus for the whole thing was we were looking to be a part of an ongoing, monthly fundraiser and support a cause that was close to us, and drive a bit more awareness for a common theme that people had to deal with, and what hit us was Type 1 Diabetes.”

Type 1 Diabetes affects more than 1.5 million people in the U.S., according to Breakthrough T1D. The body’s immune system attacks the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas, meaning people living with Type 1 Diabetes must take daily shots of insulin and monitor their blood sugar levels daily. The foundation works to fund research to treat, cure, and prevent Type 1 Diabetes.

For Perna, the cause is also very personal—both his mother, Susan, and son, Jace, are Type 1 Diabetics.

“You often hear Type 1 diabetes referred to as juvenile diabetes, because a lot of times Type 1 Diabetics are diagnosed under the age of 18,” he said. “My son was five years old when he got diagnosed and exhibited many symptoms as he was losing a lot of weight, and constantly dehydrated.” Jace is now nine years old and takes the diagnosis in stride, Perna said.

“Even though I have diabetes, I can do anything regular people can do. It doesn’t stop me from playing football and basketball,” Jace pointed out.

Once the company began fundraising, Perna said they heard from all over the community from people who have been affected by the disease, including one of Hamilton’s own employees, Keelan Brush, who was 21 when he was diagnosed. “It’s heartening to know that my company is so heavily invested in supporting T1D research. I am lucky enough to have people in my circle that do so much for the cause,” said Brush.

“The bigger thing for us is just driving the awareness,” Perna said. “Every Type 1 Diabetic’s journey is a little bit different than the next person, and managing the disease is a little bit different, depending upon your lifestyle. Ultimately, it affects how you participate in life.”

Susan Coleman has been a Type 1 Diabetic for over 27 years and is encouraged by how managing the diagnosis has greatly improved over the years. “Research has come so far in educating doctors, scientists are doing adequate testing, and insulin pump and glucose monitoring device technologies are constantly improving. All those things are needed to keep diabetics alive and thriving.”



Hamilton Building Supply matches each donation dollar-for-dollar during the fundraising period.

The fundraiser closes out each year with an event at a local restaurant, where both employees and members of the community can gather to celebrate the campaign’s success. The owner of the restaurant just so happens to have a young son who is also a Type 1 Diabetic.

“The proceeds that the restaurant brings in gets donated back to the fundraiser, and then we match that as well,” Perna said. “It’s a great night out, there’s live music, there’s a silent auction. Every year there’s random people throughout New Jersey that find out about it, and they come and join us because their son or their daughter has diabetes, or they have Type 1 Diabetes themselves. So I’ve met a lot of people over the years that had no idea who Hamilton Building Supply was as a company, but they got behind our initiative and that has been most rewarding of all.” ■

SPOT THE SIGNS

There are several early warning signs for Type 1 Diabetes, including the following symptoms:



Frequent urination



Sudden vision changes



Tiredness



Unexplained weight loss



Extreme thirst



Fruity-smelling breath

HOW TO HELP

While Hamilton’s fundraiser takes place every November, Breakthrough T1D accepts donations to support its research year-round. Find more information at breakthrought1d.org

CONCERNS HEADING INTO

2025
2026
2027

January has long been a popular time to reflect and ask ourselves what we would like to improve in the next year. While many resolutions tend to fizzle out by the end of the month, taking the time to think critically about challenges and opportunities in the industry is one you can easily keep.

This month's Real Issues. Real Answers. question has to do with optimism for the new year. As we head into 2026, we want to know how LBM dealers are feeling about how the industry is faring and what they're concerned with for the next 12 months.



What is your No. 1 business challenge for 2026 ... and why?

TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE TOP ANSWERS FROM THIS MONTH'S SURVEY.

BY LBM JOURNAL READERS

Responses from lumberyards, full-line building material dealers, and specialty dealers/distributors:

"Our No. 1 concern coming into the new year would be ways to improve our overall revenue gap as compared to the operating cost of a newer company. We are a new, growing company and with that growth we really are not able to afford to cut costs to marginalize our net profit. We need ways to grow, build an experienced employee list, provide unmatched service to our customers, and be on the cutting edge of trends. It is hard to accomplish all of the above mentioned tasks all while trying to slim operating costs to maintain a healthy bottom line. So we are focused on staying on top of market strategies, leveraging across our suppliers, better partnerships with our customers and suppliers, and lower employee turnover."

"Tariffs."

"Guiding our company with our core values and not by a cookie-cutter mold of expectations will be our method of success in 2026."

"Sales."

"Declining market demand with excess capacity, from lumber and panels to LBM capabilities across markets."

"Rising cost of doing business."

"Our largest challenge for 2026 will continue to be the training and development of new, younger employees. Not only is a large chunk of our current workforce nearing retirement age, there is a fear that their expertise will go with them. While the transition to online trainings and videos from manufacturers is convenient, the post-COVID lack of in-person training, factory and plant tours, etc. is hurting the hands-on education that many experienced LBM employees enjoyed in their early days."

"To make our supply-chain more competitive and make our bench deeper with better training."

"Competitiveness from other retailers and availability of contracts."

"Tariffs as most of our high end products are made in Europe and Canada."

"Aging sales force, succession."

"Making sure manufacturers treat the independent distributors as well as the big consolidators, Home Depot including SRS and GMS, Lowe's including FBM, QXO, ABC and L&W. The landscape has shifted dramatically. The fallout could be ugly or reasonable. I hope manufacturing keeps a level and cool head!"

"Navigating the insane amount of price increases and pricing uncertainty."

"Hiring quality employees."

"I believe our biggest goal and challenge is to motivate our team to fight to be the best. The COVID years were great for business, but I believe we are now facing the consequences of complacency from our team members. We need that hunger for excellence back."

"Capital and employees."

"How to mix AI, digital marketing, and rising costs into the traditional business model. People in the trades are the last to embrace technology and change in a real way."

"Doing more with less—resources will be tight, we will be challenged with not just maintaining the status but also setting ourselves apart without having a thriving business."

"Finding qualified sales team members."

"Trying to predict the direction of the lumber market so as to be able to buy competitively and have adequate inventory."

"Our biggest challenge is integrating AI across every department in a way that's specialized and effective. Each area of the company—sales, purchasing, operations, marketing, accounting, and logistics—needs its own customized AI tools and training to actually make an impact. The 'why' behind it is simple: AI has the potential to drastically improve efficiency, accuracy, and decision-making across the business. But it takes time, structure, and full buy-in from every level to do it right. The challenge isn't the technology itself—it's getting our people, processes, and culture aligned around it so that it becomes part of how we operate every day."

"Commercial project delays."

"Sales, gross profit growth that exceeds the level of expense growth."

"Uncertainty. Too many variables in the economy to predict what could actually happen. It could be the greatest year ever, and it could be the worst year ever. It will be very hard to prepare how the year plays out."

"Quality employees."

"Margin erosion with ever-changing tariffs. Our stock levels are not as robust as years in the past with our new focus on gross margin return on investment."

"Shaky economy that's propped up by AI spending." ▶

“Quality training for new employees to arm them with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed and help keep turnover down.”

“Housing affordability.”

“Strong competition surrounding us creating less sales and margin erosion.”

“We are going to have to offer more finance options.”

“Economy—we keep hearing about slow down. But have only seen growth in sales.”

“The cost of everything.”

“Rising cost of goods and finding staff.”

“Hiring talented sales staff and increasing customer base and market share.”

“We are in a very rural and economically challenged area. Houses have been on the market longer than last year. Second home purchases and improvements to those second homes is slowing.”

“Economy and interest rates affecting home sales.”

“Finding full-time employees.”

“We are retiring a sizable group of long-tenured staff. We have been pretty fortunate in our hiring, but it takes time and effort to bring newer staff to the experience level that’s leaving.”

“Protecting our gross profit percentage.”

“Changing the way we do everyday tasks and making our sales staff stronger by using the information from meetings to stay ahead of competition.”

“Lead flow is down and costs are way up.”

“Unaffordability of construction.”

“Getting suppliers to realize that a large part of their service to the dealer is to supply data, not just put up a website. How do we get comprehensive price files, support for our websites, etc.?”

“Improve our systems and skills.”

“Top line revenue.”

“Ownership transition to fourth generation and finding qualified staffing.”

“Preparing to go to a multi-location business.”

Responses from wholesale distributors, manufacturers, and service providers:

“Profitable sales. Suppliers and manufacturers are all fighting for limited starts.”

“Expanding business.”

“Increase sales and profits. 2025 will go down as one of the worst in our 80-year company history.”

“Housing starts and affordability. There is a tremendous need for housing that needs to be addressed.”

“Builder’s pace—the pace for 2025 has been much lower than previous years, even since COVID. Will it pick up in 2026 and, if so, will it pick up enough?”

“Tariffs and housing market.”

“Access to affordable working capital funds.”

“The very slow decrease in interest rates and the affordability of housing is keeping the housing market from growing and is stifling investments in multifamily.”

“Relevancy.”

“Finding new business with extreme competition and pricing pressure. Some of the numbers floating around are beyond low and single-digit margins which cannot last.”

“AI and its influences throughout our industry are a business challenge in that it can change how we do things in a mighty way. From marketing, design, sourcing, logistics, and serving our customers, AI-based services will strongly affect how we do business next year.”

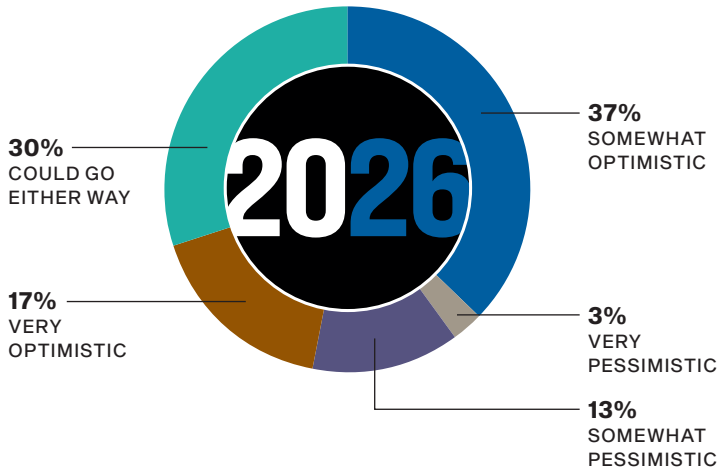
“Soft housing market.”

“Control operating expenses and cost of goods due to inflation, tariffs, and competitive environment.”

“Accurate government reporting on employment, unemployment, payroll, housing starts, permits, new home sales, etc.”



How optimistic are you that 2026 will be better for your business than 2025?



Comments from dealers:

“Expecting flat to 1%.”

“Interest rates are headed down. That is good.”

“We sell to professional trades only and it seems that the availability of financing to the developers and home builders is becoming very cost prohibitive.”

“Multi-family construction seems to be picking up again in New Jersey. Projects that were put on hold over the last two years are starting to come out of the ground. Single-family custom homes are always strong in the Jersey Shore market regardless of the overall economy. A change in the Governor’s Mansion may change builder and consumer confidence, we’ll have to wait and see.”

“Tariffs will have a negative effect on building materials and housing affordability.”

“2025 was a very good year for us and we anticipate a busy 2026, but the bar has been set high and to be better than 2025 will be tough but not impossible.”

“We have positioned ourselves well and our market still has a need for more housing.”

“We are investing in technology and have online portals.”

“We continue to find ways to adapt to the volatility of the markets and industry. Being on the front end of information and technology before there is an issue will keep us competitive and ahead of any major issues the market may face.”

“Interest rates are coming down, the tariff impact and just general attitude has changed. People act like they are getting ready to start investing in projects again.”

“We are having a very good year so we are trying to be realistic for 2026.”

“We primarily work with volume production builders, and I don’t see their volume coming back.”

“2025 was a down year for a variety of reasons—tariff uncertainty, continued high interest rates, ICE issues with framers, and lack of area mason created many project delays.”

“With interest rates seemingly going down, I see the opportunity for more new home builds taking place. Tariffs may play a role in affordability of products so it’s a wait-and-see game.”

“We are increasing our sales staff and bringing the rest of the company’s infrastructure up. I believe we will continue to have opportunities to grow.”

Comments from vendors:

“Perspective home buyers with high credit balances and interest rates limit the pool of potential buyers that can qualify for a home loan.”

“Something has to give. If interest rates stay under 6%, I think we will see some movement.”

“Very simple—the first economic year of any administration is always going to be overshadowed by the policy of the previous. The fact that there has been complete reorganization of global trade to level the playing field for the national economy that holds all the leverage, and with minimal inflation/supply chain disruption, is a generational feat. Now that this transformation has taken place, the Tax Cuts & Jobs Act has been implemented, and regulation has been slashed, we have the groundwork for a supply-side economic boom of a lifetime. It’s only a matter of time.”

“Until the Fed lowers interest rates to make housing affordable there will continue to be a decline in housing starts.”

“As we look to the new year, we see a flat line with current fed rates. In the Rocky Mountain region, we are just now starting to see more efficient standards being required for building practices. Lots to learn, but at what cost for goods.”

“Through new relationships established throughout 2025, we look for a measurable amount of growth, along with new business that will begin in 2026.”

“Interest rates have changed a little, but people are waiting to see if there will be another change. Tariffs and the ups and downs, on again, off again uncertainty is not good for business.”

“AI, tariffs, mid-term elections, and socio-political influences can move the needle either way for us.” ■

HAVE A REAL ISSUE?
Send it to Rick@LBMJournal.com.

WEATHERIZATION: INVISIBLE, ESSENTIAL, EVOLVING

As codes tighten and climates shift, weatherizing homes is becoming more complex—and more critical. From airtightness and continuous insulation to full-system solutions, manufacturers share where the category is headed and how dealers can stay ahead.

BY RONN LEVINE

Christine Williamson, an assistant professor at the Virginia Tech School of Architecture and a new-construction consultant, recently moved to Blacksburg, VA, home of the engineering school. As a mother of four, including 1-1/2-year-old triplets, she took many factors into account when looking for a home.

“We were thinking about schools, where’s the grocery store, park, playground? Is the street safe? Is there a yard?” Williamson said, “And, of course, I thought about airtightness, insulation, and glazing. But even for a specialist like me, those factors were not nearly as important as the features any real estate agent could tell you matter to the typical homebuyer.”

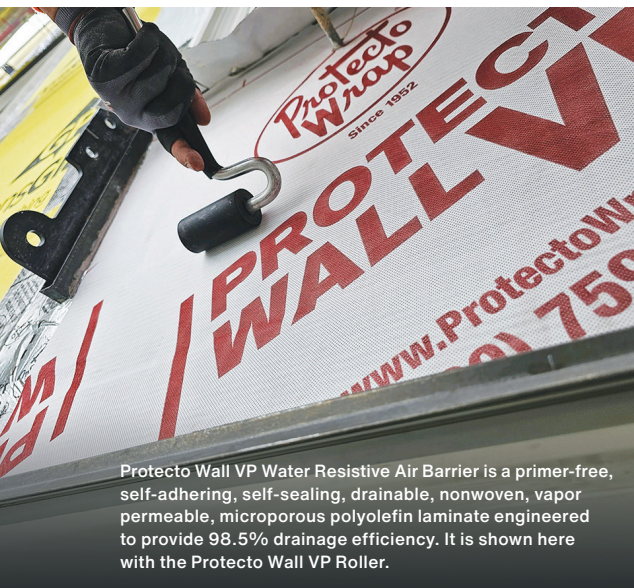
After a talk that veered from window-to-wall interface and breathing houses, to water management and weather events, Williamson said she was under no illusions about how poorly insulated her home is. “But when it came time to renovate, we started with the kitchen, not attic insulation. It’s a real bear paying those winter heating bills, but I love the space where I make my children breakfast.”

Weatherization may not be the first factor people consider when buying a home. But it’s incredibly important and thus offers tremendous responsibilities—and opportunities—to LBM dealers and builders to ensure that houses are weatherized properly. With products, technology, and codes constantly changing, it’s a lot to keep up with. Additionally, as Williamson and others know, it can be somewhat invisible.

“The biggest challenge that weatherization products face is that they are unseen,

For contractors who are opting for products with Class A fire ratings, Ultra HT from MFM Building Products is classified as a Class A roofing underlayment when used with specific metal roofing and asphalt shingle roof assemblies.





Protecto Wall VP Water Resistive Air Barrier is a primer-free, self-adhering, self-sealing, drainable, nonwoven, vapor permeable, microporous polyolefin laminate engineered to provide 98.5% drainage efficiency. It is shown here with the Protecto Wall VP Roller.



and if they're doing their jobs well, you don't have to think much about them after they are installed," said John Chamberlin, senior director, product management for Georgia-Pacific Building Products. "Traditionally, when we think about making big investments in new-home construction or repair and remodel, we focus on things like finishes that will improve curb appeal and make the buildings more attractive to prospective buyers. How do you have that conversation with a prospective home buyer when the big investment you've made is in weatherization?"

But Williamson, who created the Building Science Fight Club to instill more confidence to fellow architects on jobsites, can't emphasize enough the importance of investing in weatherization. "When you've got a more airtight, better insulated house, you can then purchase more efficient mechanical systems. You're more likely to be able to make a heat pump or water heater work well in a house that's already been weatherized or has been built to a higher standard at the outset—versus my house which is not particularly airtight and quite leaky."

She said that the three most important factors related to how energy efficient a building will be are: How much glass is there and how good is it; how airtight is the structure; and how well insulated is it and is the insulation continuous?

"As an industry, we need to do the most work on the second one, airtightness—and insulation," Williamson said. "Our energy codes are quite good right now in terms of the amount of insulation. But airtightness is still the lowest-hanging fruit for us in terms of weatherization and new construction. We can't just do the three things by themselves. We also must be better about water management."

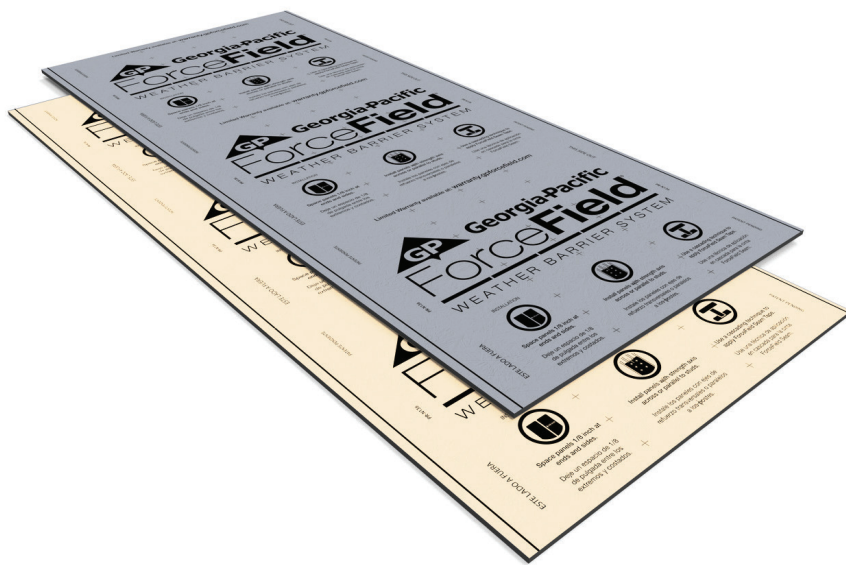
New trends bring challenges and opportunities

In discussions that LBM Journal had with nine companies that manufacture products designed to weatherize homes and buildings, certain trends emerged.

"Weatherization products are trending. Waterproofing is trending," said Alex Barrego, product manager at PrimeSource Building Products. "Housewraps and insulations are also evolving. How can we get more R-values into walls, meaning how can we get more insulation and insulating products in there without making the wall much thicker? This is what's top of mind for a lot of companies, including us. You're seeing a lot of innovative products in that space—foam board on the exterior walls, new insulation products shifting away from fiberglass into other materials. And then sealing the structure." ▶

Atlas EnergyShield is a high-performance continuous insulation board composed of a closed-cell polyisocyanurate foam with tri-laminate reflective aluminum foil facers. When properly taped, Atlas EnergyShield is an approved water-resistive barrier component.

ForceField Sheathing Panels, part of Georgia-Pacific's ForceField Weather Barrier System, are an advanced, integrated, weather-resistive barrier structural panel system suitable for wood-framed residential, multifamily, and light commercial structures offering easy installation for both walls and sloped roofs.



Full-envelope solutions like TYPAR's Weather Protection System, which includes wrap + flashing + tape + accessories, are built to perform as one—streamlining the job and strengthening long-term protection.



“We’ve really seen a shift in the building industry,” Barrego continued. “Sealing a structure very tight is new, as is the evolution of air exchange units that have come along. In the past, you didn’t really want to build tight because you always wanted your structure to breathe. And now we’re doing the complete opposite.”

Williamson agrees. “You will hear the refrain, ‘Your house has to breathe.’ When people say that, I always ask for clarification. And often, they don’t really know what they mean. Your house does need to breathe, but it doesn’t breathe through defects in the enclosure. It needs to breathe through a properly designed ventilation system.”

Addison Seay, brand manager for Magnera, maker of TYPAR, said that changing codes affect the products being developed. “Recent updates, particularly in regions like Florida, now require greater visibility of fastener patterns around window and door openings to verify proper installation and code compliance. That shift directly informed our development of

RoyOMartin’s new TuffStrand-WRB Weather Resistant Barrier is a tape-and-panel weatherization system designed to eliminate the need for housewrap, reduce labor time, and create a tighter building envelope when installed correctly.

TYPAR Clear Acrylic Flashing. By allowing installers and inspectors to see the fastening pattern through the flashing itself, it simplifies verification, reduces the risk of missed fasteners, and ensures the job is done right the first time.”

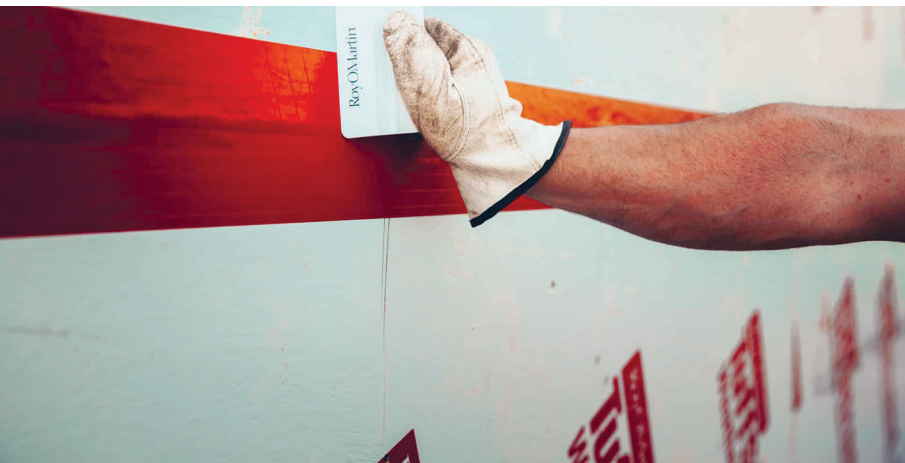
Jen Frey, senior product manager for Atlas Roofing, said that the introduction of its EnergyShield XR expands options for dealers and builders looking for a versatile, high-performance solution across residential and commercial markets for above and below grade applications. “By providing builders an alternative solution that delivers code compliance, sustainability benefits, and system flexibility, dealers can stand out as leaders in promoting next generation weatherization products.”

She also noted that the “demand for high-efficiency wall systems, particularly those incorporating polyiso continuous insulation, continues to increase as builders seek ways to meet code requirements while improving comfort and moisture control. For LBM dealers, this trend represents a growing opportunity to support customers with solutions that simplify code compliance and enhance building performance.”

RoyOMartin reintroduced its TuffStrand-WRB system over the summer, said Lacy Townsend, the company’s marketing and communications manager, and found a very positive reception. “It’s a tape-and-panel weatherization system that eliminates the need for housewrap, reduces labor time, and creates a tighter building envelope when the system is installed correctly.”

Townsend said that current price sensitivity means “products have to prove their value, whether that’s through labor savings, reduced waste, or better energy performance over time. Another ongoing challenge is proper installation. Even the best system won’t perform as intended if it’s not installed correctly. That’s why education and training are so important, not only for the builder but also for the dealer who’s helping explain the product on the front end.”

David Delcoma, product marketing manager for MFM Building Products, agrees. “The MFM website contains all the information that a distributor or contractor would need to make an informed decision,” he said. “This includes all the sales and technical literature, as well as blog articles, videos, photos on the jobsite, etc. We always recommend contacting the manufacturer if you have any questions about an application.”





Unsealed penetrations can be a source of air leakage in a home. In winter months, that can lead to draftiness as well as higher energy bills. A cold-weather-capable sealant like Lexel from Sashco can be used to keep the conditioned air where it should be ... and colder air out.

MFM will be launching a variety of new products in 2026—closer to Q2/Q3, Delcoma said. “These are items we do not manufacture now but are used in the industry. It will help broaden our product into areas currently occupied by competitive manufacturers.”

Atlas Roofing’s Frey also advises dealers to “offer training sessions and access to manufacturer technical resources. Stocking relevant products to achieve high-performance wall systems strengthens relationships and differentiates your business in a competitive market. Consistent education and close collaboration with manufacturers are key to helping customers get it right and protecting the dealer’s reputation as a trusted resource.”

Nathan Ferraro, senior marketing manager for Sashco, recommends a

training event like its annual Zero Failures. “We invite dealers and pros to join us on a journey of building science, business acumen, and sealant technology. Folks leave with enhanced networks, knowledge, and vision for the future.”

Weather propels new products

Changing weather conditions also bring opportunities. “The push for building materials to have fire ratings continues to spread outside of the western U.S. into other areas,” said MFM’s Delcoma. “With the lower-than-expected rainfall levels, a lot of areas in the U.S. are technically in drought conditions—this is contributing to contractors searching out products that meet either UL or ASTM E108 standards.”



Storage Systems for LBM Dealers

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- Metal Buildings
- Drive-Thru Systems
- Millwork Storage Systems
- Pallet Rack Systems
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Grip-Rite's ProWrap-SA is a self-adhering, primerless housewrap with a butyl adhesive, that acts as a vapor and moisture barrier, engineered to deliver 180-day UV protection, a 60+ perm rating, and 90% drainage.

"There's definitely regionality to the products," explains PrimeSource's Barrego. "A perfect example is dry-weather climates. They can take a less intricate housewrap, and then your high-moisture climates need a higher performance housewrap because the primary objective for that product is to let your house breathe. If you have a lot of humidity, you need an innovative performance fabric that exchanges the airflow. In the Northeast, they like to do external insulation board on the exterior of the home."

PrimeSource's ProWrap SA has flashing tapes and adhesives that work with it—ensuring that installers do it properly so that they can maximize the protection system warranty.

"We have a patented shingle print design on our product, and that was driven by hurricanes," Barrego continued. "If you ever see a flyover on the Weather Channel of a hurricane-hit zone, you see a bunch of blue tarps on roofs. We thought, 'What can we do here to help solve this?' Synthetic underlayment has an extended exposure time, so you can leave it out for a very long time, 180 days after you install it. So, we patented this print, put it on top, and gave the ability to roofers to go straight to the underlayment phase."

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Given today's varied weather conditions, Georgia-Pacific's Chamberlin sees opportunity in the investments to provide more insulation, make buildings more airtight, and employ other systems such as radiant barriers in attics.

"The return on these types of investments can take a pretty long time when you consider savings on energy costs," he said. "But when we start to look at the increased frequency and severity of natural storm events and the increased cost of materials and labor to repair buildings after storm damage, we start to see an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone—and thus create more weather-resistant structures while also improving the energy performance of our homes."

Lance Brown, marketing manager, Protecto Wrap, sees that same opportunity. "Some of the major residential building envelope trends we see for 2026 are centered around sustainability, advanced technology and climate-change resilience. The market is also being influenced by factory-based construction methods like prefabrication and modular building, which offer faster timelines and improved quality control."

Magnera's Seay explained that "dealers are shifting towards full-envelope solutions that include wrap + flashing + tape + accessories that are engineered to work together. At TYPAR, our Weather Protection System is built around that exact idea."

Best practices to follow

"We've launched a course on crafting resilient building envelopes," said Kara Kuntz, senior marketing manager, Prime-Source Building Products. "So builders can learn best practices and see how each product fills a piece of the puzzle to make that home a really resilient building that can handle whatever Mother Nature throws at it."

Seay said that Magnera has built a comprehensive set of training and information resources so that dealer teams, contractor partners, and specifiers can become confident with the system. These include a continuing-education course that helps building professionals understand the material options,

ADDISON SEAY FROM MAGNERA LAID OUT FOUR BEST PRACTICES FOR LBM DEALERS TO FOLLOW REGARDING WEATHERIZATION:



Stay aligned with manufacturers on product advances, code changes and system-updates.



Elevate the technical conversation. Help your contractor-customers understand why permeability, vapor diffusion, air, and bulk-water control matter to the building's durability and occupant comfort.



Deeply understand what you stock—its performance specs, installation instructions, and system compatibility.



Focus on system execution and warranty. Dealers should emphasize the system concept, installation best-practices, coordination of details, and warranty eligibility.

installation, and testing criteria for high-performing weather-resistant barriers.

Sashco's Ferraro advises dealers to always recommend the highest performing products and details. "It's simple, but it will pay dividends. Pros may be tempted to cut costs right now. Don't fall for that trap."

MFM's Delcoma agrees. "We believe there is a lot of value in using domestic sources for building materials," he said. "It's hard to rely on imported products in terms of pricing, quality, and availability. It might take some leg work, but in the end, it helps our economy. Sometimes the lowest price is not of benefit to the end customer." ▶



“Dealers can add value by becoming technical partners to their customers,” said Mandy White, marketing manager for Altenloh, Brinck & Co. US, makers of TRUFAST and TRUFAST Walls. “Stocking key self-sealing and thermal-break solutions, and offering product demos and training sessions can help contractors ensure system performance. Clear communication on product availability and pricing—along with simple jobsite reference materials—also goes a long way in reducing errors and maintaining project timelines.”

Georgia-Pacific partners with trade organizations that work to provide education and training, jobsite observation and inspection, and helps to quantify returns on investment for solutions like weatherization.

“LBM dealers should have a good awareness of all the different means and methods to construct buildings following good weatherization practices,” Chamberlin said. “They should know that there are less expensive products that can be used, but it will

TRUFAST’s Thermal-Grip IP40D is a concrete pinner tool designed to attach rigid insulation to concrete or masonry walls with 1”-4” Thermal-Grip Insulation Pins.



require more labor to do a really good job. There are more expensive products that can be used, and many of those will actually reduce labor steps and simplify the installation process. Depending on what the priority is for the builder, the LBM dealer may recommend one approach or the other.”

Atlas Roofing’s Frey said that she’s seeing a clear move toward multi-functional building materials that do more with less. “Continuous insulation products, like our EnergyShield, that combine insulation, air, and moisture control, are gaining ground because they simplify the wall assembly and help builders meet code with fewer steps.”

“The biggest trend we’re seeing is simplification,” said RoyOMartin’s Townsend. “Builders and remodelers want products that make their jobs easier and more efficient, and systems that combine performance with practicality will stand out.”

Georgia-Pacific’s Chamberlin noted that there have been products in the market such as sheathings with integrated WRBs and tapes that can serve multiple purposes. “But I wonder if LBM dealers are aware of how many options are now available. There aren’t just one or two manufacturers who are producing these types of products anymore. There are several options available, and all of them are better alternatives than the traditional building wrap and staple method of protecting a building from moisture intrusion or uncontrolled air movement.”

One thing is clear: Weatherization trends are changing almost daily, and it will be up to LBM dealers to stay up to date. “In short,” said Seay, “growth will come, but those offering systems designed for real jobsite conditions will lead.” ■

ForceField Premium Tape from Georgia-Pacific is the only approved tape for treating seams between roof sheathing panels in the ForceField Weather Barrier system and seals sloped roof seams and joints against air and moisture infiltration while offering excellent conformability for bonding around curves and corners.

CONTRIBUTING MANUFACTURERS



ALEX BARREGO
PrimeSource
Building Products



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PrimeSource
Building Products



LANCE BROWN
Protecto Wrap



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MFM Building Products



NATHAN FERRARO
Sashco



JEN FREY
Atlas Roofing



ADDISON SEAY
Magnera



LACY TOWNSEND
RoyOMartin



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Altenloh, Brinck & Co. US

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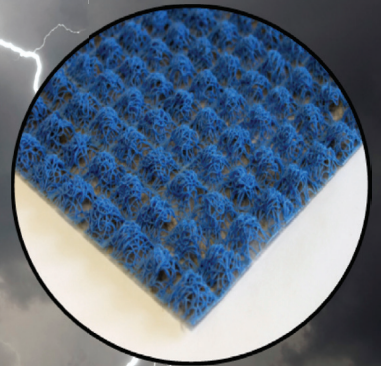
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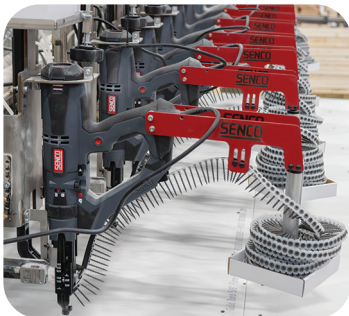
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DIGITAL DOOR VISUALIZER

TruStile, a manufacturer of interior and entry doors, has launched its digital Door Visualizer to allow architects, interior designers, builders, and homeowners to compare door styles, profiles and finishes. Within the Door Visualizer, users can design across TruStile’s product range from more than a dozen popular architectural styles for doors that reflect design goals. The tool allows users to explore variables such as glass styles, wood species, and profiles for uniquely detailed personalization. Compatible with the TruStile Project Configurator, professionals can import designs from the Door Visualizer to create a complete interior and entry door schedule. trustile.com/visualizer



SENCO DS342-SL MOUNTED COLLATED SCREWDRIVER

As off-site construction of wall and floor panels becomes increasingly popular, SENCO’s new DS342-SL is described as an off-the-shelf solution designed to help smooth the transition to prefabricated panels. According to the manufacturer, the DS342-SL is engineered to increase the speed, durability, and precision of high-volume fastening, making the automation of previously manual operations easier for construction products manufacturers. Built on SENCO’s DuraSpin auto-feed screw driving platform, the DS342-SL boasts a slim profile of just 6.8", which means several tools can be mounted side by side. senco.com

NEW SHAKE COLORS FROM DaVINCI ROOFSCAPES

Westlake Royal Building Products™ has introduced two new shake colors under its DaVinci® Roofscapes brand: Timber Black and Blonde Cedar. Representing opposite ends of the color spectrum, each showcases the unique, natural variations of cedar that emerge depending on when, where, and how it is harvested. Both new colors are available in Select Shake, Single-Width Shake and Multi-Width Shake. Modeled from hand-split shake for natural, non-repeating beauty but without the ongoing maintenance, repairs, and replacement needs of wood, DaVinci Roofscapes’ unique composite construction boasts a Class A Fire Rating, Class 4 Impact Rating, and a 110-mph Straight-line Wind Rating. davinciroofscapes.com



RAPID RAFTER DOUBLE-SIDED SQUARE

Rapid Rafter is an innovative double-sided square that reimagines the traditional rafter square, which has been virtually unchanged for nearly a century. As lumber continues to evolve with more radius edges and sapwood with wane, achieving a true perpendicular has become increasingly difficult. Engineered to solve this challenge effortlessly, Rapid Rafter enables precise layout and marking of ridges, hips, valleys, and rafter tails with accuracy and efficiency. Recognized as one of Popular Mechanics’ “Gear of the Year 2024” selections, the unique double-sided design folds flat to be used as a normal square and contains two metal inserts to attach to magnetic torpedo levels. rapidrafter.com



PRE-FINISHED ACRE FROM MODERN MILL

Modern Mill’s sustainable wood alternative ACRE is now available pre-finished with its proprietary Signature Stain Collection, developed in partnership with PPG. With these new pre-finished options, builders and installers can save time on site, extend the building season by eliminating weather-dependent field finishing, and enjoy a uniform, ready-to-install ACRE product. To complete the system, Modern Mill is also introducing color-matched Cortex® Plug Kits, available in each of the seven Signature Stain colors (Biloxi, Amory, Walnut, ACRE Black, Laurel, Montauk Gray, and Mahogany) in multiple pack sizes. modern-mill.com





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Benjamin Obdyke announced that its VaporDry SA roofing underlayment, a self-adhered, vapor-permeable roofing membrane, qualifies for use as a component of a FORTIFIED-eligible roof system. VaporDry SA features a continuous acrylic adhesive that self-seals around roofing fasteners, engineered to allow the membrane to serve as an air-control layer in addition to a moisture-control layer. FORTIFIED Home™ is a nationally recognized building method developed by the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) to promote resilient construction practices. An IBHS FORTIFIED Roof™ is specifically designed to prevent damage that commonly occurs during high winds, hurricanes, hailstorms, and severe thunderstorms. benjaminobdyke.com



TIMBERTECH ADVANTAGE RAIL

Featuring TimberTech’s patent-pending SPEEDLoc Technology, the Advantage Rail includes a snap-on bottom rail and side-loading balusters, which the company reports allow for faster installation while maintaining optimal baluster spacing. Advantage Rail is said to require 25% fewer fasteners than leading competitors, which the manufacturer says helps streamline installation time on the job. Its design features hidden hardware and color-matched fasteners plus a 25-year limited product warranty and 25-year fade & stain warranty. timbertech.com



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IBC=inside back cover, IFC=inside front cover, OBC=outside back cover, BB=belly band, INS=insert, PB=polybagged, WP=white paper.



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TARIFF WHIPLASH

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Consistent with your ongoing effort to always buy smart, you negotiated a great price for a fastener order a few months ago. Naturally, earning the best price possible required a sizable order. Since fasteners haven't traditionally faced the same price fluctuations as lumber, you felt good about stocking up and saving. You didn't give it another thought ... until you saw the invoice for nearly 50% more than the agreed-upon price.

"I'm so sorry," your vendor explained. "A major tariff increase hit while your order was en route. When it landed in the U.S., we had no choice but to pay the tariff. There is wording in our paperwork that says we will pass along any changes in cost—whether they're up or down. Unfortunately, the timing of this unexpected spike came at the worst time for your shipment."

Adding insult to injury, the government slashed the tariff the week after you received your shipment. And you've learned that your major competitor took advantage of the news to stock up on fasteners while tariffs were low.

This explains why your competitor is selling their fasteners for less than you paid. The owner of your company is asking why you're sitting on a warehouse full of fasteners that you're going to have to take a serious loss on. What would you do?



CAST YOUR VOTE ONLINE AT: LBMJOURNAL.COM

Fight back. Tell your fastener vendor that this is on them—and demand that they cover half of the unexpected tariff.

Own it. Sit down with the owner and explain how what happened was unforeseeable and beyond your control. And agree that stocking up on inventory in the future is a risk not worth taking.

Work through it. There's nothing you can do now, except play the hand you've been dealt. Come up with a plan to work through the inventory with minimal losses.

Call your congressman. You can't be the only casualty of this trade war. Call your representative and see if the government may be willing/able to help make you whole.

SOMETHING ELSE? If you'd take a different plan of attack, email your suggested solution to Wendy@LBMJournal.com. If we publish your reply, we'll send you an LBM Journal mug.

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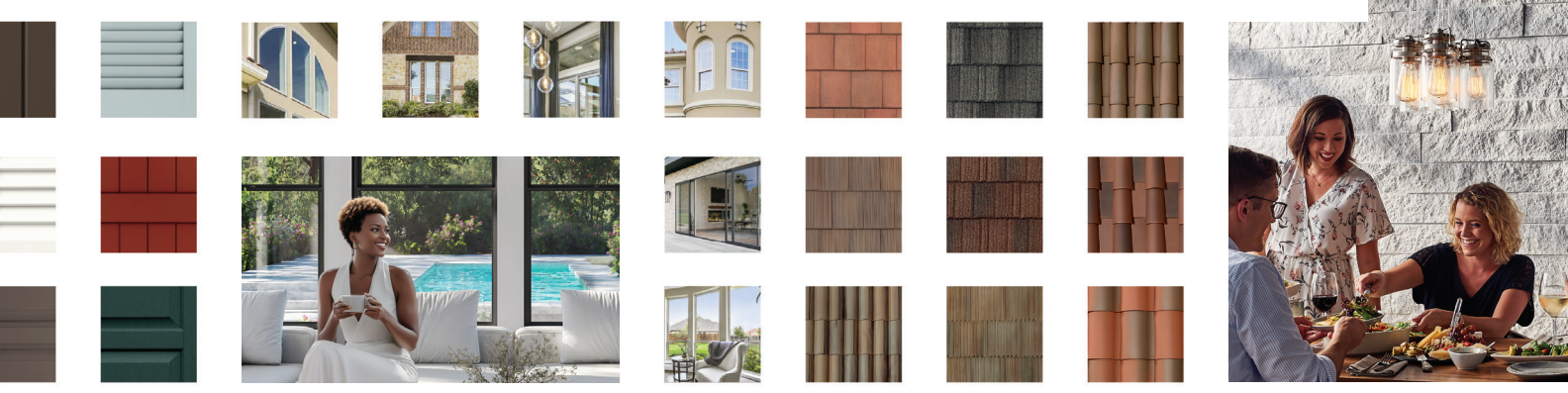
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