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*Check out Our Hot Deals on  
Western Red Cedar This Month!*

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## In This Issue

News from NOFMA

Industry News

Successful Business Tips

Coping With An Aging Work Force

Stock Up For Summer

Had it not been for the cedar tree, the early native Indians of British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest could never have flourished the way they did. Living in sheltered bays, inlets and along coastal and inland rivers, they built a rich culture unequalled in North America. An abundance of food from land, sea and river shaped their lives but equally important was the cedar tree, which was used in its entirety, including log, branches, bark and roots, for many of their lifelong needs.

Cedar is an exceptionally beautiful wood, rich in color that ranges from mellow amber to reddish cinnamon to deep sienna. Naturally durable, it has been found sunken in mud from ancient homes, with the wood still intact. Woodworkers still enjoy using it today because of its easy workability, fine texture and straight grain. Insect resistant and weather tolerant, cedar is a great outdoor wood, for pergolas, fences, decks and sun shelters ( see photo above illustrating a project in New York, using Bear Creek Lumber products, by Doug DeGroot of Hampton's Tennis). Its works as a siding or an interior paneling, especially where high humidity is a concern. Cedar makes a great sauna, can be used for summer chairs or planters for the deck. Cedar is also great for poolside buildings, garden sheds and picnic tables.

Bear Creek Lumber offers a greater selection of cedar than most lumberyards, with products to match many needs and budgets. We can offer our cedar products both in FSC certified or other renewable products grades as well as standard material. Western Red Cedar is an excellent choice for any home!



### Top Ten States/BCL Sales 1st Quarter 2001

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Washington | 6. New York  |
| 2. Hawaii     | 7. Montana   |
| 3. Illinois   | 8. Idaho     |
| 4. Arizona    | 9. Alaska    |
| 5. California | 10. Virginia |

## Western Red Cedar For Summer



**“Oh cedar tree! If mankind in his infancy had prayed for the perfect substance for all material and atheistic needs, an indulgent god could have provided nothing better”**

## More Renewable Products Available!

Bear Creek Lumber can now offer western hardwoods that have been grown in a certified forests. These include Golden Chestnut and Douglas Fir. Pacific Madrone, Oregon White Oak, California Black Oak, Big Leaf Maple or Chestnut Oak are also available from non-certified but renewable sources. Lead time for these products is 6 weeks.

Also available are 2nd growth redwood and cedar lumber products from Australia. These are plantation grown products that were planted after hardwood forests were logged in the 1940's. Products available include one and two inch materials for trim deck or fascia.

Finally, a reminder that Bear Creek has recycled timbers and beams available by special order. If you or your client are looking for any of these products, please give us a call at **(800) 597-7191**.

# News From NOFMA

## National Oak Flooring Manufacturers Association



### Controlling Damage From Shoes

Q. What can I do about dents and scratches to my wood floors caused by shoes?

A. Take care of your shoes and you take care of your floors. Extremely high heels contain a steel spike- the equivalent of a 10-penny nail- to strengthen the heel. If the leather or rubber cap is allowed to wear down, or all the way off as frequently happens, the nails holding it and the center spike can become exposed. Styles with hard plastic wedge heels, more commonly worn today, can also be damaging. Foreign items such as rocks and pebbles can more easily become embedded in the heels. The caps covering the hard plastic can also wear down allowing the shoe to cause indentations and scratches.

It has been projected that a two-ton car exerts only 28-30 lbs. per square inch (PSI) of pressure on its supporting surface, a full grown elephant 50-100 PSI, but a 125-lb. woman wearing spike heels exerts as much as 2,000 PSI when taking a normal step. That's because a lady's heel measures only about 1/20th of a square inch in size. Her weight is concentrated in a tiny area and therefore its effect is multiplied many times.

Hardwood flooring manufacturers do not accept damage to floors caused by such heels as incurring a warranty obligation, nor do wood flooring installers. Such damage is not the result of manufacturing defects or installation method. Hardwood is a product of nature and therefore susceptible to abuse or mistreatment, and no type of finishing material will, as some people seem to believe, toughen the surface of the wood. In fact, finishes are often softer than the wood and thus magnify the damage.

The solution is really simple. Check shoe heels frequently. Have them repaired when signs of damage are apparent. The cost is much smaller than the repair of the floor. Another possible solution is a shoe-free zone. In Oriental cultures, removing your shoes at the door when inside a home is considered good manners (and prolongs floor life!). Runners and area rugs also limit damage in heavily used traffic areas.

### Vapor Retarders For Wood Floors

Definition: A vapor retarder is a material which has a permeance of less than 1 perm. 6-mil polyethylene (.06 perm rating) or equivalent materials are now used as vapor retarders ( ordinary asphalt-saturated roofing felt or building papers are not good vapor retarders.)

The term vapor barrier has been commonly used to indicate materials which inhibit moisture movement. Most of these materials do permit the passage of small amounts of moisture; therefore the term "vapor barrier" is not totally adequate and "vapor retarder" is more appropriate.

The MOST frequent cause of moisture problems in a new home is moisture trapped within the structure during construction and/or continuing source of excess moisture from the basement, crawl space or slab. These moisture sources can cause problems with wood flooring. A properly placed vapor retarder can prevent or reduce problem moisture from entering the home.

#### Concrete Slab Construction

Strip flooring and related products should be protected from moisture mitigation through a slab. Proper on grade or above grade construction requires that a vapor retarder be in place beneath the slab. ALWAYS perform appropriate moisture tests to determine suitability of the slab before delivering wood products.

"Use a moisture retarding membrane, such as 6-mil polyethylene, under concrete slabs to block moisture from the soil. Use three to four inches of course sand or gravel under the membrane to act as a water capillarity break in all but dry, well-drained soils."

WA DC Home Builders Press/ NAHB 1987

#### Wood Joist Construction

For a new home with wood joist construction, after the roof, windows and doors are installed, place a polyethylene film over the crawl space earth as soon as possible. Cover the earth 100%, overlap sheets, turn up at foundation walls and weight down to avoid dislocation.

For more information about hardwood flooring questions such as these, NOFMA can be reached at (901) 526-5016 or fax (901-526-7022.

### Wood Floor Care Guide

#### Available From NOFMA

Everything you ever wanted to know about keeping your new hardwood floor as beautiful as it can be!

Available free from Bear Creek Lumber or from NOFMA for 20¢ each

# Industry News Tips For Successful Homebuilders

**Despite a slowing economy, single family and multifamily home construction continued to be strong through the first quarter of the year and into April.** Mortgage rates continue to be low and sinking lower as the weakness of the rest of the economy is forcing the Federal Reserve to lower rates consistently. Standard framing lumber is also at all time lows which is helping the construction industry keep ahead of energy costs. This may change if new quotas are added to Canadian lumber. The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) is leading the fight to keep tariffs off Canadian traders to keep prices down. Meanwhile most builders have jobs through the summer months and a true recession is not predicted thus far.



**New residential housing permits were strongest in California where they rose 4% over last year.** The strongest state for overall construction permitting was Florida where 152,738 permits were issued in April. That is 9.7% of all permits in the USA. Yet that was a lower amount than the previous year. In fact, Florida, California and Texas account for 27% of the country's total permits, with an average value of \$115,977. The average single family housing permit value was \$133,570. **NAHB estimates an annual average of 1.82 million new homes will be needed in the next ten years to meet demand.** This compares to 1.66 million that were built in the previous ten years. The demand for housing is being driven by an increase in new homes for "young seniors", trade-ups and second homes. More homes will be built in the South and West, according to the projection and they will be larger, rather than smaller than the current crop of buildings.

*It's a good bet that many of today's contractors may be gone in the next five years unless they have excellent customer relations and good business practices today. There are a number of ways to look at the problems of being a home builder but it comes down to a few basics: good communications, good planning and knowing your market. Here are a few tips I have gleaned recently from trade publications:*



- **Let your customers know your schedule**, especially when it changes. Building is time and money intensive and few customers can afford the stress of waiting for information.
- **Never leave a mess behind, even overnight.** A tidy worksite says you care about the customer and the job. It is safer and it is good insurance that tools won't be lost.
- **Don't crowd the customer.** Whether building a new home or remodeling an old one, know where you can set up and how you will lay out your work without upsetting the customer's or the customer's neighbor's space.
- **Don't disappear.** The construction industry is rife with the disappearing contractor who starts a job and then leaves "for awhile" to do another more lucrative job for a short time. Not only is this poison for the first job but your referral rate will catch up with you sooner or later. Stay on-task or risk losing it all.
- **Even if you are self-employed, once you sign a contract with a customer you are on their payroll.** Keep your "boss" happy and they will treat you well and pay you promptly.
- **Know your niche.** Look at the demographics of your area. One new niche: small, low maintenance "active adult" homes for seniors. One builder noticed no one was building homes for customers downsizing their space needs. It was his ticket to the future!

## Coping With An Aging Work Force

The U.S. work force is getting older, and the ability for businesses of all sizes to cope will depend on how they work with that reality. There is likely to be an exodus of workers in the next five to ten years, with some industries facing a 50% turnover from retirement. A continuing tightening of the labor market will make it difficult for businesses to recruit new workers given the population patterns that point to 3.7 million fewer workers in the 25-44 year old age bracket. Many businesses will need to offer incentives to their older workers to keep them employed in the future, such as bonuses to stay, restructuring jobs, reduced time schedules and even offering people near retirement new opportunities that afford them assignments outside of the mainstream of their expertise.

In addition, this is a good time for businesses to reassess how they operate. Some companies may want to redesign tasks so that they can be done with fewer people or in a different fashion. Whatever the action taken, employers need to plan now on how to work smaller, smarter and with an older group of employees so that they will not be caught unable to keep their business going in the future.

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