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Selling Quality in An Era of Composites and Plastics

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There are many ways to buy lumber these days: at the local big box, online, at the local corner store. The problem is quality. Few lumber concerns are as interested in quality as Bear Creek Lumber is.

At Bear Creek Lumber, we seek out the better grades and warehouse them because our clientele has come to depend on us for a better product. We won't guarantee every piece is flawless (it's the nature of lumber that defects occur. It's part of the mystique of using a naturally grown product) or that we can find every size of product you need. Our redwood and cedar suppliers are alternately in boom and bust positions these days when it comes to the availability of logs. We do our best for you!

The world has need for shelter and there certainly is a big market for mass produced, perfect composite and plastic building products. We prefer the old fashioned real grain materials that in the end are the signatures of a quality project. We feel good about selling beautiful wood. We hope you feel good about buying it from us.



Happy Trails To You

Coming to the Methow? Bring your mountain bike! Not only do we have some breathtaking trails, we have a staff of mountain bikers to show you where the best trails are! They are ready when you are! Want to know more? Read Trails, the Sports Trail Association newsletter of the Methow Valley. See it on the web at www.mvsta@methow.com.

Top Ten Products We Sell*

- 1 x 6 Western Red Cedar Select Tight Knot T&G
 - 11/16 x 8 WRC Select Tight Knot Bevel Siding
 - 1 x 8 WRC Select Tight Knot Channel Rustic
 - 2 x 6 Douglas Fir D & Better S4S
 - 11/16 x 6 WRC Clear Rustic Bevel Siding
 - 1 x 12 WRC D & Better S1S2E
 - 1 x 6 Pine #2 Common V2E T&G Paneling
 - 3/4 x 8 WRC STK Bevel with Rough Face
 - 1 x 4 WRC STK V4E T&G
 - 1/2 x 6 WRC Clear VG Bevel Siding
- * current

Lumber Orders Take Off after Slow Spring Start

Typically early spring is relatively slow at Bear Creek Lumber. Most of the products we sell are finish materials, used at the end of a project. April 2000 was slow, practically a graveyard, with most builders shopping, waiting for plans to gel. The situation turned around in May, with a virtual flood of orders, proving the old saying, when it rains, it pours. We aren't complaining. However, when everyone shows up at the door at once, it can get hectic. We recommend that buyers plan 60-90 days head and place orders well in advance of the project calendar so that the materials they need are built and ready to ship as their project timeline dictates. At Bear Creek Lumber, we want your project to proceed smoothly and we are ready to help. All we ask is the lead time to make it all work. Thanks and have a great summer!



Letters

Hi Merle,

Here's a picture of our home (pictured below).This is the backside and its hard to get far enough back to see the whole picture but we love it.

We're in Phase II now and the foundation has been dug. John is preparing for the foundation forms.

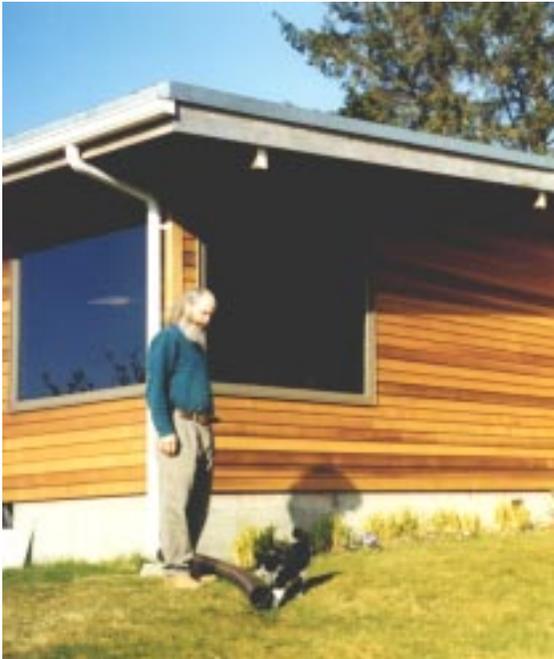
Thanks so much your great service, help and attitude-it sure helps us on this end, amateurs that we are. My brother-in-law lives in Twisp (WA) so maybe some day we'll stop by and say hi-when all this madness is over.

Sincerely,
Marie and John Murray
Sitka AK

P.S. We put smooth side out. Just loved the look of it!



Anderson's 1 x 6 Pine T&G Flooring



John Murray and friend Clear Cedar Lap Siding

Dear Bear Creek Lumber

Enclosed are photos of our house built in 1995. In Oct. 95, I bought 4,000+ ft of cedar lap siding and 2,000+ ft. of 1 x 6 pine for flooring. I rented a truck in Seattle ad picked up the lumber from you in Winthrop. It all was a good experience. Siding had a grayish preservative coat put on both sides before installing (pictured below). Floor has a white wash and 5 coats of poly (pictured above).



Mark

I want to thank you for your excellent customer service on this job for me. Your courteous and fast response to my questions and concerns on ordering materials from the other side of the country has put me in complete confidence that all will come out right.

Thanks ,
Gary Krause
Quakertown PA

P.S. Looking forward to seeing Bear Creek when we come out to visit our son in Bremerton(WA).

Email:

I look forward to getting your newsletter. I find it one of the most enjoyable reading materials I receive. I find your prices desirable and have told my friends that are now starting to build or remodel homes. Thank you for keeping me in touch.
Ron Parsons North Bend, WA



Anderson's Cedar Trellis in Arizona

Clear Bevel Lap Siding
with grey stain

(letter continued from above)
For your info, Jerome is a historic landmark, once a mining town and sits on the side of a mountain. Its between Prescott and Sedona, AZ. We designed the house to resemble an old boarding house that was built in the early 1900's and burned down 50 years ago.
Len Anderson
Jerome AZ

INDUSTRY NEWS

Spending on construction rose 1.4% in March, the third straight monthly increase this year. Spending was lead by government contracts. This represented a stronger growth than expected, which continues to spur more interest rate hikes. The Federal Reserve is determined to dampen construction by promising to continue interest rate increases throughout the year. Many analysts predict that construction spending will slow in the second half of the year. Existing home sales have already cooled.

A city council in Scotland recently approved a housing development in which no one will own their own car. Instead, residents of the 100 homes can use one from a car-sharing pool, but they will have to get it from the edge of the development. Inside this little community within the City of Edinburgh, trees will replace pavement. There will be no roads, no parking spaces and no garages. Homes will be heated by free steam from nearby factories and rain-water will be used to augment water supplies.

Southern red cedar trees are dying in Florida due to rising salt water levels. The trend is blamed on global warming which is raising ocean levels worldwide. Scientists studying the Everglades say that the salt water level spread is seven feet a year.



Trade Contractor Manual

Many builders use trade contractors to do some or all their work on individual projects. Recently Pennsylvania builder Edward Nikles created the Trade Contractor Manual as a template for other builders who want a strong and legally clear agreement between themselves and trade contractors. He cited issues of respect, professionalism, quality and profits as reasons why the manual can help others in their work with trade providers. The Manual is available from the NABH Home Builder Book Store by calling 1-800-223-2665.

In this era of higher housing costs, the U.S. Department of Housing has initiated a program to lower housing costs while enhancing housing quality and safeguarding the environment. Called PATH (Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing), the program is designed to help homeowners reduce monthly housing costs by 20%, cut environmental impacts and energy use in 15 million new homes by 30%, improve housing durability and reduce natural hazard losses by 10% while decreasing work force injuries and illnesses by 20%.



PATH Initiative

To achieve these goals, the initiative has identified a number of technological strategies involving specific components of a house as well as the processes used to build the homes. The thesis is that prevalent construction methods entail too many building trades, too much labor and too much wasted energy and dollars. Moreover, much of what is built doesn't perform well. PATH will examine specifically wall, roof and foundation systems; interior finishes and furnishings; conditioned air distribution, heating and cooling equipment and mechanical and plumbing systems as well as utilities used on-site. With better communication and more reliable data, the PATH group hopes to improve housing design and construction by providing the industry decision makers with up-to-date information about codes, materials, suppliers, construction techniques and costs.

The National Home Builder Association is working in conjunction with the Department of Housing to fund and implement these goals and hope to have a working model by 2010.



Affordability in California

California is a bellwether state, a sign that housing affordability for the rest of the country is in trouble. Builders in the state are finding that impact fees tacked on to development property are now skyrocketing past \$55,000 per lot in some areas. It often takes three to five years to get permits approved. Stringent liability laws hold builders responsible for their workmanship for ten years after construction, which some builders claim have made them sitting ducks for every project they have built. On top of that, insurance premiums are impossible to find at affordable rates for condo builders. Add up all those costs and fewer than 12,000 condo (attached units) were built in 1999 in a state of 32 million people.

California has been hit with a maze of both federal and state of regulation. Added together, there are three times more regulations in California than any other state. Home ownership in the state is only 56% of the general population, compared to 67.7% nationwide. Housing costs are out of reach for most middle income professionals, including police and teachers. The state estimates it builds one new home for every five jobs created, as opposed to 1 to 1.5 elsewhere. This has led to long commutes and more traffic congestion than ever.

The industry blames anti-growth sentiment for the affordability problem.

Measures are now being taken to give builders some tax relief, tort relief and assistance to communities that have large work forces.

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