



Bear Creek Lumber
TIMBERLINE

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P.O. Box 669 Winthrop, WA 98862
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Happy St. Patrick's Day

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Bear Creek Lumber

New Product Information Available

Bear Creek Lumber has recently updated its product literature. If you are interested in receiving a copy of this new package of information, please call (800) 597-7191 , fax (509) 997-2040 or email customerservice@bearcreeklumber.com and ask for a 2005 Product Information packet.

**We are also updating the mail list. Please let us know if you wish to keep getting this newsletter. Thank you to those of you who did respond after the Dec. newsletter!
We appreciate your help!**

Please send me the information packet as shown above []

Please keep/add my name on/to your monthly mail list []

Please remove my name from your mail list []

My name:

Address:

Customer Pictures



Clear red cedar siding and trim

Pictures from the Past
Oysterville WA 1992

National Association of Home Builders' Top Ten

Key Points about Housing that all Elected officials need to know:

- 10. *Housing is leading the nation's economic recovery.* Builders constructed more than 1.8 million new homes and apartment units in 2003, and a record 1.1 million new homes were sold last year. Production and sales are expected to exceed those figures in 2004, and a healthy economy with low interest rates and rising real incomes is critical to sustaining this level of production.
 - 9. *Housing creates well-paying jobs.* The NAHB's 215,000 members employ about 8 million Americans, making the housing industry one of the nation's largest employers.
 - 8. *Housing generates wealth.* It accounts for 32 percent of household wealth in the nation, and homeowners have a total of more than \$8 trillion in home equity.
 - 7. *The nation has a major housing gap.* The national homeownership rate stands at a record 68 percent, but millions of working families still struggle to obtain decent shelter, and the homeownership rate of minorities lags 25 points below that of white households.
 - 6. *The job of housing America is far from complete.* Builders will have to construct 18 million new-home, and apartment units over the next decade just to keep up with population and household growth.
 - 5. *There is a growing need for affordable housing for America's workers.* As the number of immigrant, minority, and female-headed households grows, demand for starter homes and affordable rental housing will increase. Unfortunately, working families are being priced out of the markets where they work, and are commuting two hours or more each day to their jobs.
 - 4. *Smart growth is key to meeting the nation's housing needs.* New household formations are expected to average between 1.3 million and 1.6 million annually during the next decade. To satisfy the resulting housing demand, local and state governments need to enact sound land-use policies and reform and streamline the zoning and regulatory process.
 - 3. *Credit is the lifeblood of the housing market.* During the next decade, America's families will need 125 million mortgage loans, or an average of \$3 trillion annually, for home purchases and refinancings, so policymakers must guard against any backdoor attempts to alter the regulations affecting government-sponsored housing enterprises.
 - 2. *Meeting the housing needs of the underserved is essential.* The federal government should support special programs and tax incentives that help low- and moderate income families buy or rent decent housing.
1. **Housing must be a national priority.** By reaffirming this commitment, the next Congress and presidential administration can help fulfill the promise of the Housing Act of 1949: "A decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family."

Bobby Rayburn

President, NAHB Washington, D.C.

Deck Picture By
Decks By Dan
Kansas City KS



Inventory News

Sales of previously-owned homes fell more than expected in December ,but still closed the year at an all-time high for the fourth year in a row, the National Association of Realtors (NAR) said in January.

Existing home sales in the United States fell 3.3 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 6.69 million units in December from a revised 6.92 million in November.

For all of 2004, sales rose 9.4 percent to a record 6.675 million, the fourth consecutive annual record. Economists polled by MarketWatch had forecast sales to fall to about 6.79 million units in December.

"We look forward to continued healthy housing activity as we enter 2005," said David Lereah, chief economist for the NAR.

The median sales price in December rose 8.1 percent to \$188,900 from a year earlier. For all of 2004, the median sales price was \$184,100, an 8.3 percent increase over the prior year, and the largest annual percentage gain in nearly a quarter century.

Lereah said last year's price increase is not sustainable. "The supply of homes is way too lean relative to the demand for homes," Lereah said. Sales fell in the West and the South, while sales rose in the Northeast and the Midwest in December.

Respondents to the National Association of Home Builders Annual Survey live in homes with a median 1,854 square feet of space, but aspire to live in homes one-third larger. When it comes to the price they expect to pay for a new home, however, owners are willing to pay only 12 percent more, the survey found.

Despite the disconnect between the cost of preferences and willingness to pay, the survey sheds light on trends in consumer preferences and "significant, though not surprising differences" among ethnic sub-groups that builders would be wise to watch, according to Gopal Ahluwalia, staff vice president for research at NAHB.

On the question of preferred home size, for example, African Americans and Hispanics would like to live in homes nearly 50 percent larger than their present homes, compared with whites (28 percent) and Asians (31 percent), the survey revealed. However, the groups expected to pay 15 percent and 14 percent, respectively, for a new home.

Some of the variations among ethnic groups reflect socioeconomic differences; others are explained by differences in average family size, Ahluwalia said. For example, larger family sizes explain the desire for four or more bedrooms voiced by more than half of the African-American, Hispanic and Asian respondents.

What's Hot

The survey showed more uniformity among the groups for the "must-have" designs and features -- those considered "desired" or "essential" in a new home, Ahluwalia said. The items mentioned in the top 10 by all four groups are: a laundry room; a linen closet; exterior lighting; a walk-in pantry; a dining room; and a bathroom exhaust fan.

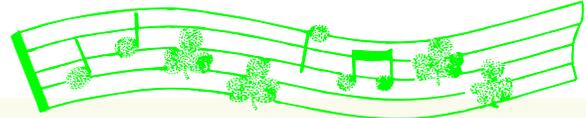
But builders can take their cues from the survey about other preferences that are (or will soon be) in high demand. While 65 percent of respondents nationwide said a home office would be desirable or essential, just 8 percent of new homes are built with rooms dedicated to such use, Ahluwalia said. Similarly, a media room is desired or essential to 37 percent of respondents, but built into only 4 percent of new homes, he said.

Top Kitchen Features

Perhaps more helpfully, the survey asked respondents to rank their top five kitchen features. Included in the lists all four ethnic groups, they are: walk-in pantry (mentioned by 84 percent of all respondents); an island work area (77 percent); special-use storage (62 percent); a built-in microwave (62 percent); and drink-water filtration (57 percent).

Top Bathroom Features

A similar list of most-desired bathroom features includes: linen closet (91 percent); exhaust fan (88 percent); separate shower enclosure (78 percent); water temperature control (76 percent); and a whirlpool tub (62 percent). However, Ahluwalia noted that separate research has shown that among owners who have whirlpool tubs installed, only 6 percent actually use them.



Letter To The Editor

Dear Editor,

As I read your piece, "Building in 2005", Volume 19, Number 1, I was greatly disappointed by the implications of some of your remarks.

Your article and the "Looking Forward" article on the front page speak of the priority problem of "quality construction" and the "risks associated with construction defects", and the shrinkage of the labor pool. Yet you and the Mr. Carliner (quoted in the piece) tell us that "if it were not for the waves of immigrants that continue to enter the United States, the situation would be even worse".

The waves of immigrants for which you are both thankful most certainly must be made up of thousands of illegals with their negative impact on our culture and taxpayer pocketbooks. The implications is that this is good for our industry and therefore good for our country. But I ask you...

What level of construction skills do these workers bring? How can waves of unskilled, illegal laborers produce the quality construction of which you speak that will "make or break most builders?" How can Mr. Carliner say that, "If it weren't for immigrants we would not be able to produce what we are building today"? Are these immigrants registered plumbers, electricians, journeyman level carpenters and masons? The Bureau of Labor Statistics report that he quotes states 33.3% of Construction laborers are Hispanic-- quality construction is not direct result of construction laborers. How much of this labor shortage is the result of selfish self-interests of those hiring these workers rather than paying the wages necessary to buy resident labor?

It behooves us to think of what is good for our country, and then of ourselves. Sincerely,

Jake Sable
Kingsly Homes
Pittsburg PA

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