

Bear Creek Lumber TIMBERLINE

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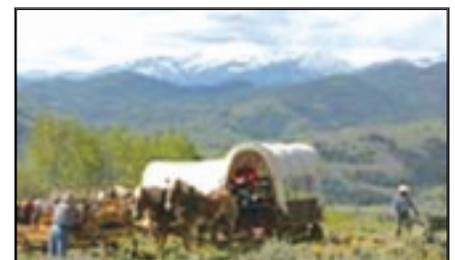
Mid-Summer Inventory Clearance: Something for Every Builder

August is usually the calm before the storm of fall building. To liven up sales, the inventory crew has scratched around and found two pages of specials to offer for August only. The list includes a little of everything and is designed to clean up a bit of this and a little of that, as well as highlight what we have overstocked, or in new inventory. If you see something you like but don't want it shipped right away, no problem. With a deposit, we can hold the item until you are ready for it! Call Bear Creek at (800) 597-7191 today!



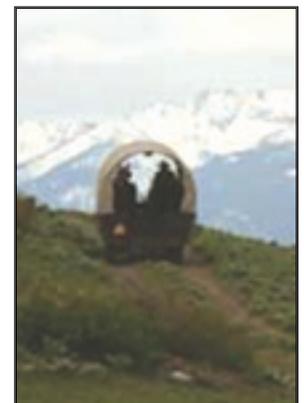
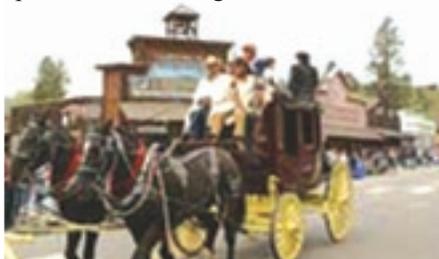
The Washington Outfitters & Guides Association (WOGA) is the only industry organization in Washington that represents outfitters, sport-fishing guides, horse and llama packers, white-water rafters, hunting guides, and other outdoor professionals who supply "outfitted services" to the recreational public in our state. Every year, the Washington Outfitters and Guides Association has a rendezvous during the spring. They meet at the Columbia River, following old trails and ride to Winthrop where they camp together in the city park. The trip takes most of a week with over 20 wagons and 150 people attending in 2003. More pictures can be seen under New Gallery at www.woga.org

Wagon Train Rolls through Winthrop; Bear Creek Lumber's Kristie is Cookin'



Kristie cooks up dinner on a camp stove in one of the tents. Camp for 150 participants was set up every night and taken down every morning in settings such as these. And they were hungry at every meal!

Bear Creek's Kristie Edwards is a cook for a local outfitter and is seen here doing food prep. She is just as busy at the lumberyard this summer, keeping customers happy while following an endless trail of paperwork as our wagons roll out loaded



It's a bumpy ride but the scenery can't be beat!

Industry News

May new home sales set a new record. Low mortgage rates and a quick end to the Iraq war spurred sales in the month, bolstering home building's position as a bright spot in the slumbering U.S. economy. The 12.5 percent May gain was the largest since September 1993. The May 1.157 million annual rate topped the previous record of 1.057 million set in September 2002.

Existing single-family home sales rose in May and were at the third-highest monthly pace on record, according to the National Association of Realtors (R). Sales increased 1.2 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate (see note a) of 5.92 million units in May from an upwardly revised level of 5.85 million units in April. Last month's sales activity was 4.4 percent above the 5.67-million unit pace in May 2002. The record is a 6.10-million unit sales rate in January 2003, while the second highest is 5.96 million in January 2002.

The nation's housing market should continue to provide solid support to the U.S. economy throughout the remainder of 2003 and beyond, and will likely set a new record for sales of new single-family homes this year, the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) reported in July. "For home builders, the early part of this year was complicated by unusually large swings in weather conditions and uncertainties related to the buildup to war with Iraq -- yet sales of new homes held near a million-unit annual pace and residential fixed investment accounted for about one-third of total GDP growth in the first quarter," said Kent Conine, NAHB president and a home and apartment builder from Dallas. "Home sales actually have strengthened in the wake of the war, and are now on track to beat our previous forecasts and support the economy over the balance of the year."

Wood Floors Add Value

Why wood flooring? First and foremost is that home buyers will pay 5 percent to 10 percent more for wood floors. Homes with wood floors also sell faster than other homes. That's according to a National Wood Flooring Association survey of 1,500 real estate agents nationwide.

Wood also taps into a number of market trends. Wood floors capture the back-to-nature materials trend, and they're more energy-efficient. The cellular structure of wood traps air and gives it superior insulation properties (the association reports that it takes 15 inches of concrete to equal the insulation qualities of just 1 inch of wood). Wood and its woody cousins, such as bamboo also provide a 'green' fix, in that finishes can easily be repaired or replaced without having to send damaged product to a landfill.

"Wood definitely helps sell houses," says wood flooring expert Dennis Butcher. "Propelling that trend is that wood floors are more maintenance-free these days," he says. "We used to have those old ladies who said they'd never have a wood floor again. But maintenance on wood is a lot easier than it was in the old days, since there's no need for paste wax and all that."



Controlled Forest Fires: Boon or Bust?

Removing fuel loads from forest helps reduce wildfire risks, but there's no proof yet whether prescribed burning or thinning through logging is better, said experts - government and university researchers - to more

than 300 scientists gathered at the Sierra Nevada Science Symposium at Lake Tahoe.

The theme: Fire is not the enemy it was made out to be for the last century, but instead it is a natural part of most forest ecosystems that will be with us forever.

The people attending the conference agreed that fire management strategies must be viewed over long periods - centuries and longer - and not formed in response to an immediate crisis like an unusually severe fire year. More money is needed for research into fire and its effects on wildlife habitat and forest ecosystems.

Jim McIver, Forest Service research ecologist, Pacific Northwest Research Station, LaGrande, OR, is leading a five-year study investing \$1 million at each of 13 sites across the country comparing the effects of prescribed fire versus mechanical thinning versus a combination of both. "At this point, information needed to answer this question is anecdotal or completely absent," McIver said. "Within five years, we hope to know a lot more about how they compare."

Phil Omi director, Western Forest Fire Research Center at Colorado State University, said skeptics have a 'healthy concern' about whether thinning is a "veil for expanded logging of remote or unroaded areas." He said there have been relatively few studies - about 15 since 1955 - on whether fuels reduction has any effect on future fire risks. Or if prescribed burning reduces fuel loads are better.

Locally, prescribed burning is not popular when it fills rural communities with choking smoke for weeks at a time. A spring burn in the Okanogan forests of Washington dropped visibility to less than 100 feet for several days, prompting the Forest Service to pay local residents to leave town until the smoke cleared. The fire, close to 2000 acres, left dozens of good timber trees dead or dying, and smoke still pouring out of the forest a month later. The state of Washington's Department of Ecology cited the Forest Service for endangering public health. The Forest Service stands by its decision to "naturally" thin trees with fire, regardless of health issues, both to the forest and to the community. Many residents felt safer, knowing that a prescribed burn was reducing ground fuels close to where they lived. Others complained that with a three month natural fire season already, adding 6 months of prescribed burning is only making air quality worse for too long. Ironically, environmental groups, who applaud burning the forest

instead of logging it, opposed a ski resort in the same area, because of concerns about air pollution from both cars and wood burning stoves. The amount of particulate matter due to forest burning far exceeds the amount a resort would have created.

In 1997, some areas that had been thinned and then burned, burned as heavily as the non-treated areas, prompting the question: is this another government boondoggle or will it actually slow lightning or accidental fire down? Unfortunately, it will probably take millions of tax dollars to figure it out.



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