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Summer 2021

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IN THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Sunny Summer Ahead 4

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Forging Forward 6

WRLA NEWS

Membership Renewal 9

MEMBER CORNER

Ride Through the Rockies 13

ADVOCACY BULLETIN

Growing the Next Generation 14

NEW! PRESS ROOM

Media Attention: What It Does and How to Get It 15

HR CORNER

COVID-19: Managing Stress and Anxiety 16

BETTER BUSINESS

Site Thefts Rise as Building Material Prices Climb 18

GREEN GUIDE

Electric Log Trucks 20

DOLLARS & SENSE

Tips to Prevent Employee Dishonesty 22

INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

Record High Lumber Prices 24

NEW! MEMBERS IN THE COMMUNITY

Making a Difference 38

FEATURES

A STAR STORE IS BORN

Weathering the COVID-19 Storm in New Winnipeg Headquarters 26

SELLING A SUMMER SANCTUARY

Merchandising Tips from Toja Grid 33

On the Cover: Toja Grid backyard pergola.

COVER PHOTO: TOJA GRID. LEFT: STAR BUILDING MATERIALS. RIGHT: TOJA GRID.



MASTHEAD

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SUNNY SUMMER AHEAD



The cover of this magazine issue has me inspired and very excited that spring is finally here (in the Prairies at least) and summer is just around the corner! I can confidently say that never have I felt this longing to be outside and working on outdoor projects at home and especially at the lake. I'm sure it's driven by lockdown fatigue, which we can all relate to and of course the three winters we experienced here in the Prairies certainly didn't help but it looks like we have turned the corner weatherwise!

Spring is associated with fresh starts, renewal and inspiration and it is timely to have the theme of this magazine focused on sales and merchandising. Finding inspiration in the midst of a pandemic is extremely difficult – with the insane pace of work and supply chain issues, there really hasn't been that down time to take a step back to work on your business and perhaps merchandise an inspirational space.

If you're looking for a little inspiration, then I encourage you to read the member features in this magazine! Star Building Materials in Winnipeg undertook a significant transformation and as it turns out the timing couldn't have been more perfect, which you will discover in the feature on page 26. Star Building Materials worked with other WRLA members and industry partners, Burlington Merchandising and Fixtures Inc. and Alexandria Moulding, to develop the plan and bring this project to fruition and the images will provide a snapshot of this amazing transformation.

If you're looking to sell some summer sanctuaries this summer, then look no further than Toja Grid on page 33. From a sales and merchandising perspective, Toja Grid can not only help

give tips on setting up beautiful in-store displays to help boost sales through their Dealer Support Program, but they also have an outstanding digital presence that truly captures attention and can drive sales to your retail location.

While right now it seems that business is flowing with relative ease as the demand for product is fast and furious, we do know this is not sustainable and the market will eventually slow. By taking some of the tips in this magazine we do hope that you can generate some new long-term customers that will stay engaged with your store and products you have to offer.

The connection between brick and mortar and digital merchandising has never been more important and amid the pandemic, e-commerce evolved 10 years. As we all continue to adapt, we are here to help and keep you connected to members that can provide you with solutions that will support your continued success.

As we look ahead towards summer, our WRLA golf tournaments are on the horizon. We cannot wait to see and connect with you in person again!

Liz Kovach
PRESIDENT, WRLA

Spring is associated with fresh starts, renewal and inspiration and it is timely to have the theme of this magazine focused on sales and merchandising.

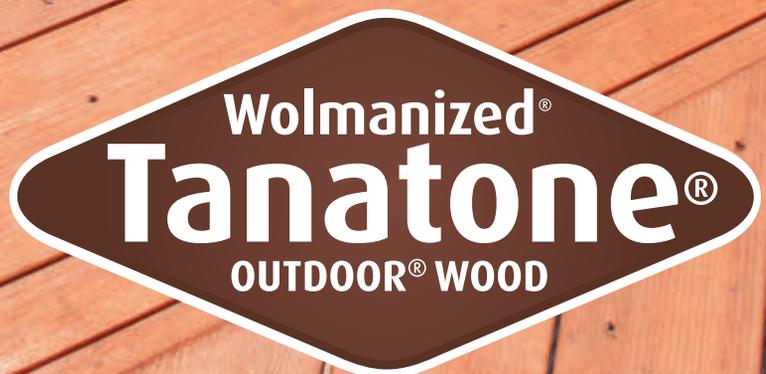
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FORGING FORWARD

Wow! What a start to the outdoor building season! Like many of the WRLA members I speak with in my area, I am very grateful for the unexpected, rapid increase in sales our industry saw in 2020, and continue to be grateful for that uptick that has continued into 2021. However, like anything in business, nothing comes easy.

In 2020, along with the rapid up swing in retail sales, came a rapid up swing in lumber and building material prices, and fairly so. In middle school social studies, we studied the principle of supply and demand, whereas the demand for a product increases so does its value. That said, the spike in prices we witnessed in the later portions of 2020 were predictable. So why, over a year later, are we still seeing historical high prices and what seems like historical short supply on lumber? How, in the last 12 months, did Canadian lumber producers not adapt and increase production to account for what was sure to be another boomer year in the construction industry?

As I am sure it's the same in your workplace, questions like those above dominate a lot of the daily conversation between our team of employees and our customers. The truth of the matter is though, it isn't just one thing that we can point our finger at as being responsible for the situation we find ourselves in. It's a multitude of factors that have created what can only be described as a perfect storm.

Issues as far back as the mountain pine beetle can be tied to the material shortages we are seeing today. That on top of forest fires, flooding and staffing shortages at all levels of the supply chain due to COVID-19 and other pandemic-related issues have put us where we are today. It is our job as frontline representatives of the building materials industry to educate



our team and our customers on the root causes of these price increases and product shortages.

Finally, in times like these I am most grateful for the relationships I have forged over the years with our suppliers. Our business in particular does not deal with a lot of different suppliers, but those that we do, we buy a lot from. I whole heartedly believe the suppliers we support do the same for us and do their best to protect us. So, to all you suppliers out there, who do their best to protect their clients, thank you!

I hope you all have a great spring, and I look forward to connecting with as many members as possible over the course of the summer!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joel Seibert". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Joel Seibert
CHAIR, WRLA

The truth of the matter is though, it isn't just one thing that we can point our finger at as being responsible for the situation we find ourselves in.

PHOTO: KELLY MULNER

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WRLA NEWS

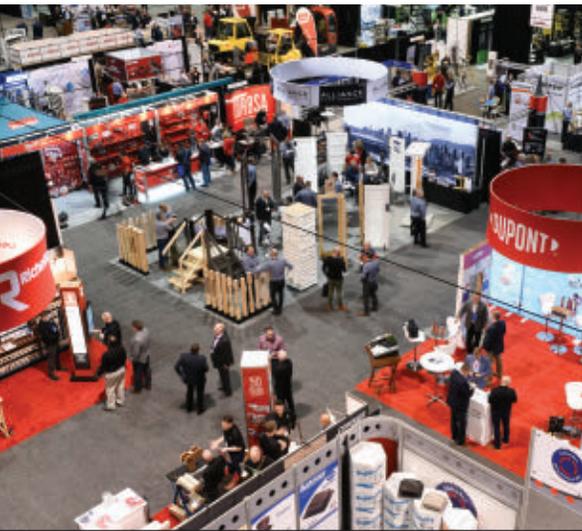
RENEWAL REMINDER!

It's time to renew your WRLA membership. Membership renewals started April 1. Please get in touch with us if you need to renew so we can ensure your business is listed in the annual *WRLA 2021-22 Directory and Product Source Guide*. Also, so you still have access to all of the WRLA member benefits!

Contact wrla@wrla.org to update your business and contact information.



Renewal season is also a great time to refer a business that is not yet a WRLA member. They get all the benefits of being a member, and you get a \$50 Visa gift card for the referral!



2022 SHOWCASE NEWS

We are thrilled to be working towards an in-person WRLA Building & Hardware Showcase this January! Our member portal has been updated and booths are now on sale. The showcase is scheduled for January 20-22, 2022 at the RBC Convention Centre in Winnipeg and our partner hotels are already taking bookings.

If you would like more details about booking a booth, please contact jessicac@wrla.org. The WRLA takes our members' safety seriously. As we navigate the pandemic, we will post any updates regarding the event in the member portal.



WELCOME AMBER

Please join us in welcoming Amber McGuckin as our new marketing and communications manager.

Amber has a degree in communications from the University of Winnipeg and a diploma in creative communications from Red River College.

Amber may have a familiar face as she was a reporter for Global News the past four and a half years covering everything from politics, the economy and health care. Previously, she worked as a reporter in Regina, SK and Kenora, ON. Amber also worked in the promotions department at CTV Winnipeg and managed communications and social media pages for several small businesses.

In her spare time, Amber can be found exploring a new hiking trail, trying out a new restaurant or planning her next vacation.

You can reach Amber at amcguckin@wrla.org or 1-800-661-0253 ext. 4.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Email us at marketing@wrla.org or reach out via social media.



The team at the WRLA is packing up the office in preparation for our upcoming move. As of May 17, 2021 please send all mail to our new address:

**300-95 Cole Avenue
Winnipeg, MB, R2L 1J3**

We hope you will be able to come visit us in our new space someday soon!

FORE! UPCOMING GOLF TOURNAMENTS



WRLA golf tournaments are a chance to mingle with members and connect over a round of golf. It's also an opportunity to forge new connections and exchange ideas and expertise. Plus, it's a chance to help the next generation as the net proceeds fund our education grant program.

SASKATOON GOLF TOURNAMENT

August 10, 2021

The Willows Golf Course
Saskatoon, SK

WINNIPEG MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

August 18, 2021

St. Boniface Golf Course
Winnipeg, MB

CALGARY CLASSIC GOLF TOURNAMENT

September 9, 2021

Sundre Golf Course
Sundre, AB

For WRLA golf tournament sign up and sponsorship contact: jessicac@wrla.org.

* Please note the events remain fluid and are reviewed by the WRLA and committee on a regular basis. COVID-19 protocols will be followed at events.

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED.



NEW WRLA WEBINAR

MASS TIMBER – THE NEWEST OLD BUILDING MATERIAL

June 8, 2021 at 12:30 CST

Mass timber is advancing its way into non-traditional applications with new technologies that change how things are made.

Andre Lema, manager of business development with Western Archrib, will illustrate with recently built projects what has been created with glulam/mass timber.

We will be discussing why mass timber is becoming popular and how lumber retailers can benefit from this market shift.

To learn more and register for the series, visit wrla.org/webinars or contact WRLA Trade Show & Events Manager, Jessica Cranmer at jessicac@wrla.org.



EDUCATION GRANT APPLICATIONS OPEN!

Supporting the next generation is a passion for the WRLA. We are thrilled to offer 14 grants valued at \$1,300 each in 2021. The funding has been made possible from the net proceeds of our annual golf tournaments. A special thank you to all the sponsors, golfers and volunteers who support our dream to continue raising funds to give back to the industry and those pursuing further education.

Grant applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. CST July 31, 2021.

For more information visit wrla.org.

WILDFIRE FUNDING IN BC

British Columbia announced more than \$5 million in funding to reduce wildfire risks. The money is being directed at 44 projects with funds distributed through the BC Community Forest Association to 15 community forest agreement holders. “Our StrongerBC plan is designed to help people, communities and businesses in every corner of the province get back on track,” says Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation. “This community forests program has multiple benefits, such as creating jobs, protecting Crown timberland and making communities safer from the threat of wildfires.”

The province says the projects include thinning trees, cutting back underbrush and low branches as well as conducting prescribed burns to remove flammable material. The funding will also go towards developing operational plans to reduce wildfire risks or developing ways to identify how to reduce wildfire risks in a particular area.



TRAINING COURSES FOR YOUR BUSINESS

The WRLA is thrilled to be able to offer virtual courses. The flexible online delivery allows you to build knowledge and skills on your own schedule.

BUILDING SCIENCE AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY AWARENESS

This course is designed for anyone in building design, construction and management who wants a better understanding of how buildings work. The training will provide you with a solid grounding in the fundamentals of building science, from air movement and moisture management to energy efficient windows and doors. It will also get you up to speed on National Building Code requirements for new buildings, additions and major alterations.

ONLINE ESTIMATING LEVEL 1: ESTIMATING FUNDAMENTALS – DECKS AND GARAGES

Become an expert estimator in the lumber and building supply industry. This online course teaches you the basic knowledge of estimating for a variety of projects including decks, garages and roofs. You will gain the knowledge base of the projects and be able to understand the steps used in these projects from estimation to completion.

You can learn more about these programs and sign up by visiting our website: wrla.org/programs/training.

WRLA NEWS



Do you have a shining star on your team? We want your nominations for the upcoming industry awards!

We love to celebrate the best and brightest in the lumber and building supply industry. We have two prestigious awards to hand out – Sales Representative of the Year (one per province) and the Industry Achievement Award.

Nomination deadline is October 29, 2021 and you can nominate someone on our website at wrla.org.

BC MILL SHUTS DOWN

A Penticton mill has announced its permanent closure. Greenwood Forest Products made the announcement in April that the company would be closing its production facilities. A press release distributed by the business says the company had been struggling with the continued rising cost of lumber and general lack of lumber availability over the last five years. “This recent period has proven to be too hard on the value added wood sector in British Columbia,” President and CEO Wade Walker says. “GFP would like to thank all the dedicated employees over the years.” The business was launched in 1983.

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MEMBER CORNER

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RIDE THROUGH THE ROCKIES

Get your sweat on for a great cause! The annual Ride Through the Rockies event is scheduled for August 20-22, 2021. The three-day challenge pushes 30 experienced cyclists to ride more than 300 km in the Rocky Mountains in support of Habitat for Humanity Southern Alberta.

You can also join in the fun virtually and ride in your neighbourhood or on your stationary bike on August 21.

The event has raised more than \$700,000 for the charity over the past eight years.

Registration is open on the Habitat for Humanity Southern Alberta website at habitatsouthernab.ca to ride with the team virtually or donate to the cause.



Event sponsored by WRLA member Star Building Materials



WARM WRLA WELCOME

The Sexton Group is welcoming John Magri as the new director of programs. In his new position, John will manage sourcing and negotiating product, vendor relationships, direct relationships with Sexton Group members and developing and implementing strategic purchasing plans. John has over 30 years of experience in purchasing and procurement. For the past 16 years, he has worked with a prominent building supply dealer in Manitoba as their general manager. In this role, John was responsible for all retail departments, store operations, inventory management, customer service and store staff supervision. Prior to this, John held progressive roles with Princess Auto and then went on to experience an entrepreneur's life.



WAY TO GO TYLER

Home Hardware's Tyler Nowochin was named the 2021 Young Retailer of the Year in April by the North American Hardware and Paint Association. The program promotes the next generation of aspiring independent home improvement and paint retailers and recognizes the achievement by retailers age 35 and younger throughout Canada and the United States. Honourees are chosen based on a number of criteria including professional milestones, community engagement, continuing hardware industry education and extracurricular activities.



HAPPY RETIREMENT JIM

Jim Roach started with Can-Cell Industries Inc. 24 years ago as the sales manager for Canada. Jim transitioned into his latest role as purchasing manager and new product development three years ago. Jim served as a board member for the WRLA for many years. He forged many great relationships throughout the years and has been a great asset to the building materials industry. Jim will be greatly missed and we wish him a healthy, happy retirement. Jim is looking forward to traveling in retirement, spending more time in his favorite destination, Cuba. He is also looking forward to starting his new job as the marshal at the Stony Plain Golf Course.

GROWING THE NEXT GENERATION

Liz Kovach, WRLA

While we continue to represent the industry at the government level on various issues, one concern is becoming an increased focus for the WRLA – labour force. These issues have been experienced in every industry during the pandemic, and for some it continues to be a concern.

Education and training may seem unrealistic during a phase when time is limited and supply issues have overtaken the focus of consumer discussions on a daily basis, yet new people need to be hired and need to have training to help develop their skills and knowledge to keep them on for the long term so they are not only successful in their existing role, but can grow into other roles.

As we continue to engage with you, our members, and learn about the issues you are experiencing in this area, the WRLA has made it a priority to support you. With the help of members that participated in our first training and development round table, we have identified some areas where we can start to provide solutions and we will continue working on those. Several suggestions came about, which include vocational training to be deployed at a younger age along with additional training to help engage younger generations.

COVID-19 impacted our ability to deploy pilot projects we planned in 2020, as the education system didn't have the capacity to take on new projects in the midst of crisis mode, yet it is encouraging to see that others see the opportunity in working with the WRLA and lumber building materials industry.

Following our first roundtable discussion, conversations with local government have ensued and as a result, the WRLA has been provided avenues where it will have a seat at the table to voice the needs of the industry, ensure our industry is on the radar and help shape programming at the education level as well. The first strategy discussion took place on May 11, and we will of course follow up on the outcome of those discussions along with next steps.



With training and development for employees being such a large component of the success of your businesses, we are looking to engage more members to help support the programs we are working on to provide knowledge, mentorship and to promote the industry as a great industry to work and make a long-term career in.

Being deemed essential during a crisis certainly helps highlight the value of the industry and we as a collective have the opportunity to harness this and elevate our profile. Please let me know if you or any of your team members are interested in volunteering some time towards this initiative so that we can continue working towards long-term success!



If government relations and advocacy are of interest to you, reach out to learn how you can get involved.

Contact: lkovach@wrla.org

MEDIA ATTENTION

WHAT IT DOES AND HOW TO GET IT

Amber McGuckin, WRLA

The media spotlight has been parked squarely on the COVID-19 pandemic for the last year, but now more than ever journalists are looking for other angles to the story. One of those hot topics is the pandemic's impact on the lumber industry and why the costs have been climbing. If journalists are contacting you for a story they are working on, don't sweat it. We have some tips to help you through the process.

1 JOURNALISTS ARE USUALLY LOOKING FOR YOUR EXPERT OPINION

The way journalists are looking to talk to you, is in your role as an expert in your field. The way you might hear a journalist grilling the prime minister is not likely the same way you are going to be questioned for your story. Getting your business name out into the public through journalists is a great way to position yourself and your business as a place that understands the industry and is a leading expert in the field.

2 PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW

Journalists will cover off the 5Ws — who, what, where, when and why (and bonus: how). You can really anticipate most of the questions they will ask. Remember, they are not quizzing you and you can take time to answer the questions or refer to notes you have taken. Journalists want their stories to look good, so they will typically use your best quotes. Avoid jargon and industry terminology so they clearly understand what you're saying. Have facts and examples ready, but remember this is more of a conversation so don't come in with a speech that you've memorized. Keep it simple.

3 PIVOT IF YOU MUST

If you are asked about something you don't want to answer, you don't need to answer the question. In the world of public relations this is called spin and something politicians master. In your own way you can use this strategy. Use your key message that you want to get out there and tell them more about that. Don't ever say "no comment" as that just piques the interest of a reporter.

4 TELL THE TRUTH

It may seem obvious but if you aren't confident on an answer to a question, take the time to review your notes or be honest in saying you're not 100 per cent certain. There is nothing worse than being caught making something up and it can severely harm your credibility.

5 STAY ON MESSAGE

From the moment you start talking to the reporter, you have to be "on." There is no such thing as off the record and anything you say, even when you don't think you're being recorded, is fair game. Be friendly and stick to your key messages.

6 BE RESPONSIVE

Journalists are covering multiple stories each day with extremely demanding deadlines. If you're getting a call from a journalist, chances are you're just one person on their list of many who they are calling. If you want to be interviewed for the story, make plans with them for the earliest possible time. Journalists typically work on stories that have a deadline that same day so if you wait until the next day to reach them, they are probably already on to their next assignment. Be responsive and act fast, or the moment could pass you by.

7 EARNED MEDIA IS EXTREMELY VALUABLE

When businesses and organizations are interviewed for articles, it's an example of earned media. Buying an ad gets you attention, being in an article earns you credibility. If you can come across as the expert in lumber and building projects in your community, other residents will start to see you as the go-to place.

8 HOW TO GET MEDIA ATTENTION

If you want to be interviewed by reporters there are a few ways you can get their attention. One of the most effective is to reach out to local reporters directly. If you look at your local newspaper, reach out to those journalists who are covering stories related to the economy and introduce yourself via e-mail. Usually, a quick Google search can bring up a journalist's professional contact information. Let them know you would be happy to talk to them and they will keep you in mind for future stories on the industry, small businesses and the community.

9 LOOK THE PART

It's important to know if your interview is over the phone, Zoom or in person. If you're going to be meeting in person or video conference, your interview likely will be recorded and you will want to make sure you brush your hair, check your teeth and make sure you're presentable.

10 OFFER EXTRA INFORMATION

It is helpful for journalists if you have referred to any information that you provide it for them. For example, if you reference statistics, send the reporter a link to the source of the information after the interview. Sending them information to help them better understand a complex issue can be a huge relief.



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COVID-19

MANAGING STRESS AND ANXIETY

Homewood Health

As we navigate uncharted territory and the evolving realities of COVID-19, we may experience potential fear, stress and anxiety due to the overwhelming volume of information and the demands being put in place to combat the spread and risk of infection.

Anxiety is highly common and is often triggered by specific events, trauma or stressful scenarios creating challenges in our daily activities and interactions. Stress results from normal reactions, where adjustments or a response is required, causing our mind and bodies to react with physical, mental or emotional actions.

Remember, we all react differently to stressful situations. Given our diverse backgrounds and the communities we live in, our beliefs and behaviours may vary.

Stressful reactions during this pandemic may include, but are not limited to:

- Fear and worry about our health and the health of those you care about
- Changes in sleeping and/or eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping and/or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol or tobacco, or other drugs

What can you do to stay calm during this period of uncertainty?

- Be aware of your mental health. Pay more attention to your feelings and reactions rather than the event itself.
- Reach out to your support system via text, telephone or through virtual conferencing. Maintain physical distancing. Let your family, colleagues and friends know how they can best support you during stressful periods.
- Create a daily routine. Establish a daily process and don't let the basics slip. Maintain a schedule and keep up with daily hygiene, chores and cleaning practices.
- Don't judge or blame yourself. Don't criticize yourself for having these reactions. Be patient with yourself.
- Avoid saturation. Manage your media and online intake and try and focus on something else.
- Find something to help distract you. Some people find it helpful to keep busy with hobbies, routine chores or physical exercise.
- Take time to rest and relax. Maintain good sleep habits and take time for yourself and practice taking deep breaths or meditation.

What should you do if your stress or anxiety doesn't diminish from week to week?

It's better not to keep the worrying thoughts and anxieties to yourself. People close to you don't always know how to help, despite their best intentions. If these reactions have not diminished from week to week, don't hesitate to contact your assistance program for coaching or counselling support.

If you take good care of yourself, ensuring that you obtain the support you need, you will gradually regain your normal sense of self, given the current COVID-19 restrictions in place.

Remember that taking care of yourself is integral to being able to help others. Helping your family, friends, co-workers and others cope with stress can aid in making your community and workforce stronger.

Please be mindful of your community. There are vulnerable populations who are more susceptible to COVID-19 than others. We are all in this together.

References: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Manage Anxiety & Stress (2020)



Homewood Health is the Canadian leader in mental health and addiction services. With over 130 years of experience, they achieve outstanding outcomes every day through their national network of over 4,500 employees and clinical experts, and through the Homewood Health Centre—one of Canada's largest and leading facilities for medical treatment of mental health and addiction disorders.

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Liz Kovach is pleased to introduce your PIB business partner team, Glen, Ryan and Jarrett.

Contact either of them in 2021 to review your renewal or create a new plan.

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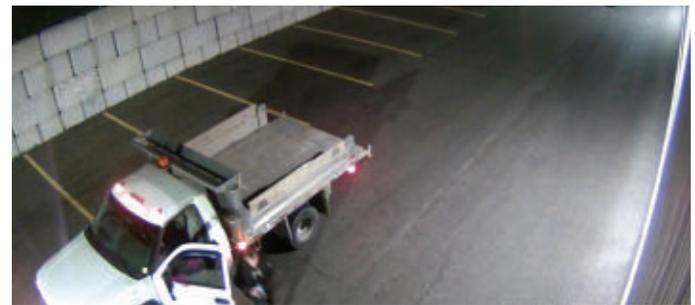
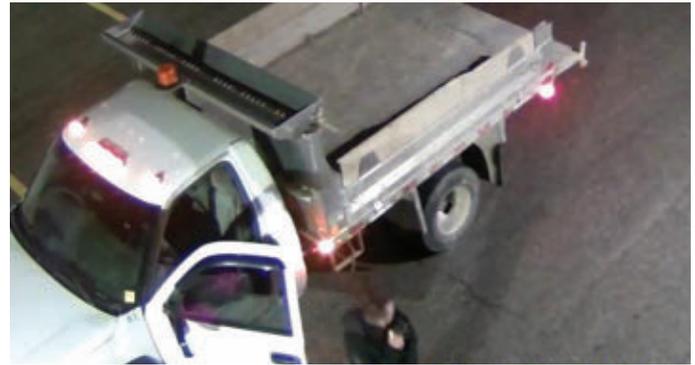
SITE THEFTS RISE AS BUILDING MATERIAL PRICES CLIMB

Amber McGuckin, WRLA

The price of lumber is not a steal of a deal these days and the high prices mean that it's a bigger target for thieves.

Sunil Sharma, vice-president of Bluestone Homes in Winnipeg, had \$1,300 worth of OSB stolen from his build site in Transcona. "In yesterday's dollars it would have been \$500. Because of the price of it today, that stuff is gold," he says. Sharma is building a 24-unit duplex project of row housing and had been storing the leftover lumber on site for upcoming builds. His site supervisor saw a black truck pull up near the pile and by the time he realized what was happening, it was too late. "My site supervisor goes over there to see what's going on and questions the guy about where he got the wood from. The guy said it was from a job site up the road. The site supervisor didn't know if I authorized it and tried calling us," he says, adding the site supervisor took photographs of the suspects, their vehicle and license plate. "There's always been some things stolen here and there. What I can say right now is it always used to be one or two home reno guys like doing smaller projects. Over this last little stretch, it's been larger quantities and sheet goods have been the target."

Sharma is now considering hiring a security guard in addition to putting up cameras and signs. He's not the only one who's speaking out about lumber being stolen. Police in Guelph issued a media statement that a stolen truck was used to ram a gate and steal lumber from an area business. Police say on April 12 around 4 in the morning, a truck forced a business gate to open and about 600 pieces of lumber were loaded onto the back of the truck, which had been reported stolen earlier from Kitchener. The whole thing was captured on surveillance cameras so they have a description of the suspect. More than \$10,000 worth of lumber was reported stolen.



TIPS TO PREVENT STORE THEFTS

Guelph police say businesses are encouraged to do their part to make their lumber yards less attractive to thieves. Police say it's also important to upgrade your security cameras so if you are a victim of a crime, it will be easier for officials to track down those responsible.

Guelph police tips for small businesses:

- Increase lighting on your property over night
- Physically block access to your yard when possible
- Consider on-site security and cameras
- Display signage advertising your site has surveillance cameras

TIPS TO PREVENT SITE THEFTS

The issue is happening across the country and Edmonton police say it's an issue in Alberta too where thieves target newer suburban neighbourhoods, specifically where there's a lot of construction going on.

Edmonton police tips for build sites:

- Take home tools at the end of each shift
- Install security cameras
- Hire security to patrol sites
- Encourage neighbours of the property to call police if they notice suspicious behaviour
- Thefts typically happen on nights and weekends

Above: The Guelph Police Service released these surveillance images in relation to a theft of \$10,000 worth of lumber from an area business.

PHOTOS: GUELPH POLICE SERVICE.

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NOTE: Due to limitations of the printing process, actual shingle colours and granule blends could be different from those pictured. It is recommended that you view a full size shingle before making a final colour selection. BP Canada reserves the right to change colours at any time.

bpcan.com



ELECTRIC LOG TRUCKS



The world's first electric log trucks are getting ready to roll in Canada. Mosaic Forest Management has partnered with local Vancouver Island service provider, EcoWest Driven, to introduce several Tesla semi-trucks into log hauling.

Mosaic says the British Columbia forest sector has a significant role to play in addressing climate change. The company explains that working forest captures carbon as it grows, and wood products keep that carbon locked up for decades. New trees are planted and the renewable cycle repeats. However, forestry operations generate tailpipe emissions, including from log trucks. Electrifying the fleet is a particularly good approach in British Columbia where over 90 per cent of power in the province is generated from clean hydroelectric sources. "We are committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2035 and electrifying our log hauling fleet is a significant step in that direction," says Jeff Zweig, president and CEO of Mosaic Forest

Management. "BC is a global centre of excellence in forestry, and we are proud to work with our local partner, EcoWest Driven, on this important project."

EcoWest Driven's mission is to introduce electric semi-trucks to the transportation industry. "With our in-depth experience and knowledge of the forestry industry on Vancouver Island, we are excited to partner with Mosaic to utilize Tesla's innovative electric semis into log haulers," says Timber Johnson, director and co-founder of EcoWest Driven.

The company's goal is to be the catalyst to utilizing hauling fleets in a variety of industries from fossil-fueled trucks to electric trucks to help with costs and being more environmentally friendly. "We have begun the process of creating charging infrastructure and a new electric vehicle maintenance facility in Parksville, BC to accommodate this new demand for emission-free heavy haulers," added Jarvis Shaver, director and co-founder of EcoWest Driven.

TESLA SEMI SPECS

According to Tesla's website, [tesla.com](https://www.tesla.com), their semis offer these advantages:

- Acceleration from 0 – 100 km/hr with 36k kg in 25 seconds
- Kilometre range either 475 or 800 depending on the model
- Four independent motors on rear axles
- Energy consumption of less than 125 kWh per 100 kilometres
- Advanced autopilot to avoid collisions
- Expected base price for the 475 kilometre range semi: \$190,000
- Expected base price for the 800 kilometre range semi: \$230,000

To learn more about electric semi trucks, visit [tesla.com](https://www.tesla.com).



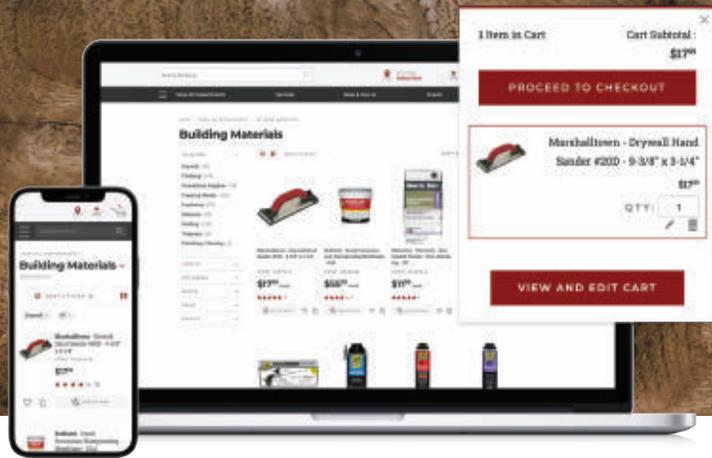
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TIPS TO PREVENT EMPLOYEE DISHONESTY

Federated Insurance

When running a business, preventing theft is always a top priority. So, vaults are purchased, locks are installed and fences are built. But the threat isn't always coming from where you might think it is. Surprisingly, some of the people you should be most concerned about may already have keys into the building.

Employee theft should be a major concern for business owners, a bigger concern than some may realize. And since it's such a big issue, it's vital that business owners learn the details of employee theft and take the appropriate precautions to prevent it.

EMPLOYEE THEFT BASICS

Just how big of a deal is employee theft? Well, a 2012 study by the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners found that 25 per cent of internal fraud cases result in losses of \$1 million on average.

In fact, employee theft costs Canadian businesses about \$1.4 billion every year, according to the Retail Council of Canada, a non-profit that represents more than 45,000 retail stores across Canada.

On average, the council found employees steal about \$2,500 in cash or goods from their employer before they're caught, while customers only steal about \$175. Normally, the \$2,500 isn't stolen all at once but rather over time. The council also believes there are approximately 566,000 employee thefts that go undetected each year.

So how does all of this dishonest activity within an organization play out? It can take many forms, including cargo theft, forgery, data theft, cyber-related embezzlement and theft of cash, cheques, business equipment or client property.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT EMPLOYEE THEFT?

Because employee theft is such a widespread issue, it's important that all business owners, ranging from small businesses to large companies, take the appropriate precautions against it. Here are some tips that may help:

- 1 Establish a pre-employment screening program.** The program should include reference checks. You may also want to perform criminal and credit checks depending on the position you're hiring for.
- 2 Create security guidelines.** The guidelines should outline the company's policy for employees who are caught stealing.
- 3 Utilize human resource programs.** Develop programs designed to build employee loyalty and align employee and company goals. For example, you could offer training and skill upgrade programs or a mentorship program.
- 4 Ensure that company merchandise and/or property isn't easy to steal.** This could include a number of tactics ranging from locking up merchandise to installing a surveillance system.
- 5 Establish controls.** Controls should be in place for things including petty cash disbursements, bank deposits, withdrawals,

issuance of cheques, payrolls, reconciliation of bank statements and payment of invoices.

- 6 Ensure no one employee has control of all parts of a financial transaction.** Owners should separate responsibilities and functions so more than one employee deals with any given financial transaction. Workflows should also be organized in a way that ensures one employee verifies the work of another.
- 7 Perform regularly scheduled and random inventory checks.** A program should be implemented to manage these checks and ensure they are done properly and consistently.
- 8 Monitor the premises with closed circuit television (CCTV) surveillance.** Before installing this type of system, be sure to keep in mind any applicable privacy law requirements with respect to surveillance.
- 9 Check merchandise records.** All incoming merchandise should be checked against purchase invoices and all outgoing merchandise against shipping documents.
- 10 Being firm is important, but so is being friendly and fair.** If you treat your employees with respect, they're far more likely to return the favour.

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LUMBER COSTS

Amber McGuckin, WRLA

WITH NORTH AMERICAN RECORD-HIGH PRICES ON THE COST OF LUMBER, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF FACTORS AT PLAY. LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT HOW WE GOT HERE AND WHAT'S TO COME.

1

Production curtailments due to fires and mountain pine beetles have caught up with us in the market that has seen an increase in demand

6

Stumpage fees play a factor in the pricing of logs

11

With the drop in demand, pricing dropped

2

Since timber supply is managed 65-80 years ahead, the boom and bust in the natural resource sector would deplete resources

7

Expectations for 2020 were good, but lumber prices were low in 2019 and heading into 2020

12

The DIY market came forward and the demand outpaced the ability to supply

3

Mountain pine beetles' impact more than two decades ago forced a government sanctioned annual allowable cut

8

COVID-19 hit and the initial demand of products took a cliff dive

13

Weather impacted the ability to harvest and transport logs

4

This cut meant 2 billion board feet of the fibre was removed from the market

9

The COVID-19 pandemic led to mill closures for two to six weeks and once they were able to resume, operations were not back to full capacity

14

BC typically harvests throughout the year but forest fires, wet weather and winter breakup can all impact this process

5

In 2018, there was a massive spike in forest fires creating further supply issues

10

The home centre/dealer market supply was being met and bookings were delivered based on orders provided

15

Transportation issues in rail and trucking persisted as employees were furloughed, collective bargaining agreements created delays and a lack of back hauls contributed

REACH RECORD HIGH

WHERE ARE WE TODAY?

1

Raw material shortage impacts persist for resins. This is due in part by hurricanes along the Gulf Coast and the Texas freeze that took plants offline. Panel and engineered wood products such as OSB and Plywood were being impacted and not keeping up with demand. The resin shortage impacted polyethylene, PVC, vinyl siding, vinyl windows and insulation leading to higher prices and production delays.

2

Roofing, steel, drywall, fasteners, etc. are all impacted by price increases and contribute to time delays.

3

There are massive supply chain disruptions including container availability, ship delays and product containers being utilized for sanitizers.

WHAT'S NEXT?

There's continued volatility expected for the first half of 2021. What you can do is communicate with your suppliers and customers. Secure letters of intent to help solidify commitments and consider installation and layaway options.

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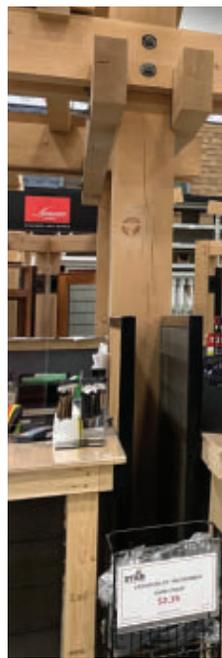
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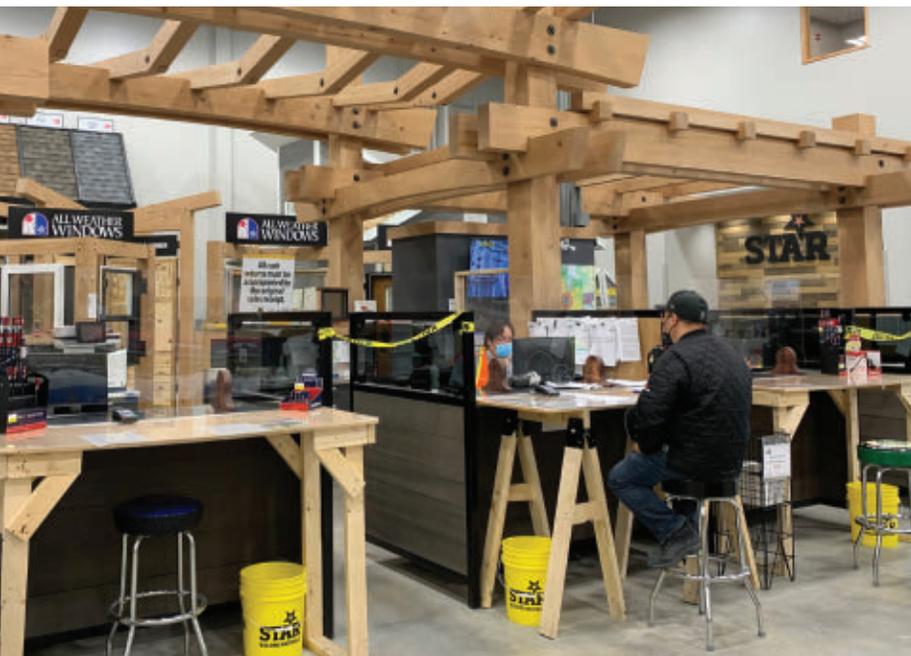
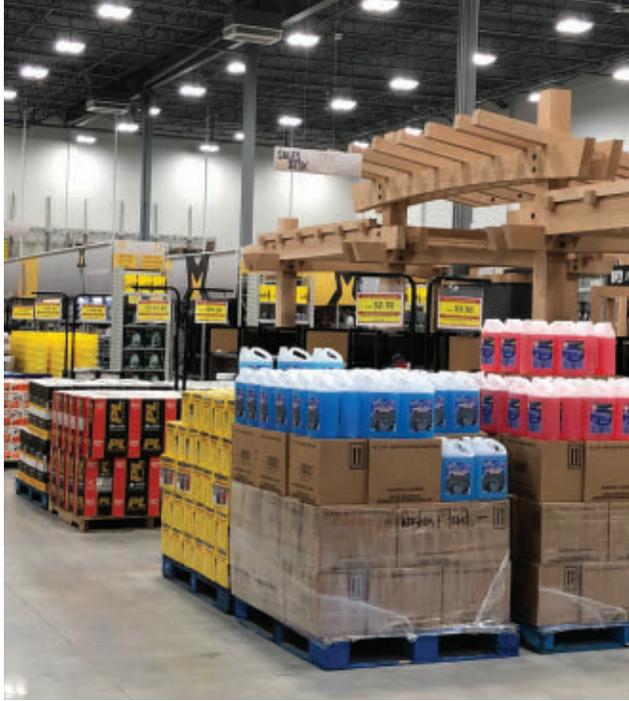
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A STAR STORE IS BORN

WEATHERING THE COVID-19 STORM IN NEW WINNIPEG HEADQUARTERS

Amber McGuckin, WRLA

The team at Star Building Materials in Winnipeg knew they needed a new store, but they didn't know the project would position them perfectly to prepare for an influx of customers in the pandemic. "It was perfect timing for the new store because it allowed us to handle all the extra business. In the old store, we couldn't have handled the extra business and COVID-19 precautions. Having the bigger store allowed us to handle the extra flow with adhering to all the policies and restrictions – it was a bit of a Godsent for us. We wouldn't have been able to handle what came last year without it," says Mark Kennedy, vice president – Winnipeg with Star Building Materials.

PHOTOS: STAR BUILDING MATERIALS.

Left: The new Star Building Materials store in Winnipeg.

STAR BEFORE THE RENOVATION

THE NEW STAR BUILDING MATERIALS!



Above: Before and after photos of the new Star Building Materials headquarters in Winnipeg.

The store underwent three phases of construction that started back in 2014 and officially finished fall of 2019. “We knew we needed to expand. We were bursting at the seams,” Kennedy says. The project started with getting rid of the old warehouse and building a brand new 17,000 square foot warehouse space, new covered cantilever racking for lumber storage and a paved customer service area. “It used to be a mud pit with gravel and potholes. Anytime it rained, you had to get around the lakes it created. You were up to your ankles in mud when picking up your lumber. This was an opportunity to redo the customer service section,” he says.

Phase two involved the expansion of the shipping and storage yard to the five-acre property across the street. “We bought a junkyard in the area, cleaned it up and got rid of everything. It’s an 8,000 square foot storage warehouse and dispatching service

site. We separated our delivery and shipping business with our customer service area. Our forklifts are not picking up from the same pile Johnny homeowner is picking from now. We added a whole other round of deliveries each day, which is huge for us,” Kennedy says.

Phase three involved moving the shipping area over to create room to build the new store in 2018. The new space boasts 52,000 square feet – about 20,000 square feet of which is retail space with a second story office space. A total of 24,000 square feet of the project is a drive-through warehouse. The space looks less like a traditional store and more like a showroom with bright lights, high ceilings and tidy shelves. “It’s so much nicer and so much more efficient and customer friendly. It’s a huge difference for us,” says Kennedy.

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Above: The new Star Building Materials store in Winnipeg.

The soft opening of the store went forward as planned September 30, 2019, but the company was planning a major grand opening celebration for March 2020. “COVID hit so we cancelled everything and shut the whole grand opening plans down. No one was going anywhere and marketing to people to attract a great big crowd wasn’t in anyone’s mind. Now with how long it’s gone on, we’ve scrapped the grand opening plan. The next big plan will be an anniversary,” Kennedy says.

As much as the team was disappointed to cancel their grand opening party, they didn’t need to drum up business as the pandemic pushed sales to new highs. “The way markets went with COVID, renovations and buildings went through the roof. We didn’t need to promote it, the business came itself,” Kennedy says adding it’s hard to tell how much of their increased sales came from the new store or the pandemic renovation/building push. “We knew the new store would bring in new customers but COVID brought in more customers too. The new store made us able to handle the new business. Our expanded lines on tools, electrical, paint lines and interior hardware products is all new to the store so how much traffic did we bring in there, that also bought lumber, panels and 2x4s. Our business is up substantially, but it’s unclear how much credit goes to COVID or the new store. They happened at the same time.”

Kennedy says it was also important to remember that even though their sales were higher, prices skyrocketed so it inflates sales. “Consumers don’t realize we are running at tighter margins than we were before because you can’t pass on some of these escalated costs to consumers. The market won’t take it. You can’t just pass along some of these large price increases, so you’re eating some of these to help the customers.”

Kennedy says the new store was designed with customers in mind that doubled to help with the pandemic measures with

larger aisles so they could easily accommodate social distancing in the store and other COVID-19 protocols. They also moved their customer service desk, so a friendly staff member is always ready to help. “The open and bright feel is one of the biggest things. They walk in and it’s so much different than what it was. Our service desk has a lot of experienced people who have been with us for 20-plus years. It’s a personalized experience the way we have it set up instead of wondering the aisle looking for someone to help you. We focused on the customer service with the setup of the store. People love the way you can talk to an experienced salesperson right there so easily,” he says. “We put a lot of effort into our showroom. We have a lot of displays to showcase our product to work with windows and doors that aren’t typically displayed well. The contractors and builders, who are the heart of our customer base, are now bringing their customers in to talk about what they are choosing for new builds. It’s helping out our customers’ customers to make those buying decisions.”

Another key to their success is their team that doubles as a true community. “This year alone we had over 25 folks have a 25-year anniversary. A lot of people when they work here, it’s the Star family and you’re a lifer. We have a lot of people who are hitting 30 and 40-year anniversary dates and that’s not unheard of. We treat our people well and it’s a great place to work. Once you get in, there is room for advancement and they stick around. It’s been a benefit of ours to have that much experience,” Kennedy says. “When you walk in, someone is very quickly going to say hi to you. Anyone can help you. There are no department walls and people will not say ‘that’s not our area,’ we help everyone in the whole store. It doesn’t matter who you talk to. You’ve got someone who has been around for a long time.”

Locally owned and operated, Star Building Materials is excited to host customers at their Calgary and brand new Winnipeg locations.



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STAR BUILDING MATERIALS' HISTORY



Above: The new Star Building Materials store in Winnipeg.

From humble beginnings as a local lumberyard in Winnipeg, to becoming one of the largest building suppliers in Western Canada, Star Building Materials continues to define themselves by the quality of products and services they offer. They have the knowledge and experience needed to guide you through any project. With advice you can trust and service you can count on.

1958

Star Building Materials was incorporated in Winnipeg. Star Building Materials supplied building materials and trusses to Quality Construction and Quality Homes out of the existing location on Speers Road. Adding a location in Calgary, Star was the backbone for Qualico's expansion in the early years, supplying prefab components such as walls, stairs, doors and trusses to help Qualico become one of Western Canada's largest developers.

1987

Star expanded to supply building materials to all home builders, contractors, renovators and the public. Star quickly became the destination store in Winnipeg for anyone needing materials for a project. With experienced, knowledgeable people guiding you through any task, Star was and still is the place where you can "Buy Where the Builders Buy!"

1996

Star brought further expansion in Winnipeg with the asset acquisition of Dominion Lumber. One year later, Star Building Materials acquired Kilcona Lumber, giving Star the land space to move and expand the Truss Plant and introduce Star Package sales, now known as Star Ready to Move Homes, focusing on selling cottages and garage packages in Winnipeg and the surrounding area. Star Truss Systems and Star Ready to Move Homes are still located on the corner of Springfield Road and Lagimodiere Boulevard today.

2014

Star brought on a five-year plan of expansion. Star's expansion was one of necessity. Still in the original location on Speers Road, there was a huge need for a renovation. Acquisition of five acres of land at the corner of Speers Road and Maginot Street started a five-year rebuild that included a new warehouse, new shipping yard/office and storage building, fully asphalted yard and customer service area, drive-through warehouse in a new 52,000 square foot combined retail store, showroom and office space. This expansion was completed in the fall of 2019.



WRLA MEMBERS IN ACTION

We are proud to spotlight two WRLA members who contributed to this building project:

- Alexandria Moulding
- Burlington Merchandising and Fixtures Inc



PHOTOS: TOJA GRID.



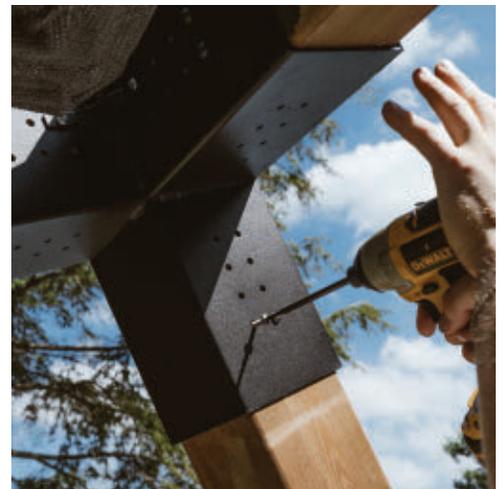
SELLING A SUMMER SANCTUARY

MERCHANDISING TIPS FROM TOJA GRID

Amber McGuckin, WRLA

Home has become the workplace, resting space and entertainment centre for more Canadians as they spend an unprecedented amount of time at home during the pandemic. They've been using that spare time to spruce up their spaces and tackling their yards and landscaping.

Toja Grid's Modular Pergola Bracket System has been a great option for customers during the pandemic who want to have a backyard oasis to retreat from the rest of the world.



Left and Above: Toja Grid's Modular Pergola Bracket System.



It offers a simple approach to style and design along with affordability, quick assembly and quality craftsmanship. They just need to add lumber. “We expanded our manufacturing in Canada to ensure we are meeting the demand. We are in stock for our dealers. Being domestically manufactured, we can meet dealer demands. We are making sure we can put inventory in their stores when they need it the most. From a consumer perspective, the backyard oasis is something everyone is looking at,” Toja Grid National Sales Director Mike Rodine says.

Toja Grid is speaking to the Do-It-Yourself market with their simple modular pergola system. “Our product is very easy to use. You can have little to no DIY experience and build a modern-looking pergola

in the afternoon. We are a high-quality, Canadian-made product that has been granted U.S. patents*. It’s an exciting time at Toja Grid,” Rodine says.

Toja Grid’s products are offered in various retailers, and they partner with them every step of the way. They have a Dealer Support Program with a dedicated team to assist with onboarding, support product sell-through education and provide a toolkit of marketing materials to assist with the in-store experience and outline product details. “The number one execution point of success is setting up a display. Dealers that do well put the display up and cross-merchandise it with things like patio furniture, a BBQ and string lights to create in-situation inspirations for the consumer. I believe

that allows the consumer to say, ‘that’s what I want,’ and within the afternoon, a person can purchase the brackets and lumber from the retailer and be sitting under it at night. That’s inspirational for backyard DIYers,” Rodine says. “We work with dealers to sell Toja Grid product, and the dealers will sell the wood separate to the brackets or package something at store level to make it easier for consumers. There are a lot of independent dealers who are successful in pairing items to help create a great customer experience.”

Above and Right: Toja Grid’s Modular Pergola Bracket System.

**Pat. Nos. 10858819, D887025. Please check tojagrid.com for updates.*



TOJA GRID

PHOTO: TOJA GRID.



Above and Right: Toja Grid's Modular Pergola Bracket System.

Rodine says their social media platforms, boasting tens of thousands of followers, help create a community for customers to learn more about the products. "We are grateful for our online community. Customers organically share the work they do, and there's a lot of cross-conversation between consumers, and that speaks volumes."

Their community helps promote products to their social networks and friends, showcasing the endless possibilities of the products. "Some great examples that I have seen are a kayak rack and a carport at a cottage to protect cars from tree sap and debris. I have even used the brackets to make an ice rink," Rodine says. "It was a lot of

fun and withstood the water and what we needed it to do. The rink put it to the test, and it stood strong."

Rodine says he wants dealers to know they will be with them every step of the way and that Toja Grid is constantly innovating, teasing that more products are coming soon.



PHOTO: TOJA GRID.

TOP WAYS TO MERCHANDISE TOJA GRID PRODUCTS IN STORE

1

Create an in-store display to showcase Toja Grid. It is a great opportunity to cross merchandise and create an exciting experience that a customer could envision in their yard or outdoor space.

2

Place the in-store display in a high-traffic lumber or seasonal area.

3

Have someone within the store be an owner or ambassador to understand all the different brackets and their usages and review Toja Grid's training and product knowledge material.

MEMBERS IN THE COMMUNITY



GROWING CHANGE IN THE COMMUNITY

This year, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada positively impacted close to 40,000 youth in over 1,100 communities across the country. In Lloydminster, Alberta, the impact that BBBS has on the local community is no different.

For the past two years, Home Hardware Building Centre – Lloydminster has been the Garden Champion, providing the seeds, plant markers and gloves for the community garden plot, which is in support of BBBS of Lloydminster’s Summer Mentoring Program.

As produce is harvested, families can enjoy seasonally fresh vegetables and fruits at home with their families.



SUPPORTING THOSE IN NEED

Olympic Building Centre stepped up to help those experiencing homelessness with a donation around the Christmas holidays. The team dropped off a truck load of food donations to Main Street Project in Winnipeg. Way to go guys!



REWARDING RADIOTHON ACHIEVEMENT

Windsor Plywood Regina stepped up to support the Z99 Radiothon once again in support of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) in the Rawlco Centre for Mother Baby Care at Regina General Hospital.

This year, Windsor Plywood stores were asked by the Windsor Plywood Foundation if they had any community charities to consider for donations. Windsor Plywood Regina owners Val, Richard and their son Brennan submitted the NICU and the radiothon.

The Windsor Plywood Foundation accepted the suggestion. The foundation, held at Vancouver Foundation, issued a donation for the Hospitals of Regina Foundation NICU in the amount of \$10,000.



Jack



Alexander

MEMORIAL MILESTONE

In May 2020, Castle Building Centres Group Ltd. created a trust fund for the grandchildren of one of their members in Nova Scotia, whose parents tragically lost their lives during the mass shooting in April.

Castle was heartbroken to learn valued members Kurt and Tina Gratto of Masstown Hardware Castle Building Supplies lost their daughter Jamie Blair and her husband Greg Blair in the senseless act of violence.

Their children Jack, 10, and Alexander, 12, managed to escape unharmed. Castle created a trust fund for them to meet their future needs for cost of living, education, health and extra-curricular activities such as sports and hobbies.

Contributions from the building supply industry poured in and so far more than \$93,000 has been raised this past year. Donations are still being accepted on Castle’s website.



Tell us about what you’re doing in the community!
Contact: amcguckin@wrla.org



**TOUGH
TOOLS YOU
CAN TRUST**



- **HEAVY-DUTY PERFORMANCE**
- **BUILT TO LAST**
- **JOBSITE TESTED**





Are you growing your profits... ***OR JUST YOUR BUYING GROUP'S BOTTOM LINE?***

Whether it's annual corporate fees, surcharges or just having to compete with corporate stores, your profits shouldn't take a backseat to your buying group. Are they helping to grow your bottom line, or just their own?

Join a group where
YOU ARE THE BRAND,
and where your success is the number one priority.

At Castle our focus isn't on corporate profits, it's on the success of our 300+ members. We provide the tools they need to grow their business, become more profitable and continue to grow and thrive.



YOU **ARE THE** **BRAND**

Learn more at youarethebrand.ca