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SALESPEOPLE: Three come aboard

▼ Continued from PG. 1

a contractor for the last year and a half, Moretti said. Business was good, but Moretti said he thinks Dirom found it tough to go it alone.

"He was in the store one day, and I was saying that I was looking for an outside salesperson," Moretti said. "He told me when he was younger he'd done some outside sales for a company like ours. I told him this was right up his alley."

After some more conversations between the two, Dirom agreed to join Ricci's expanded sales staff.

Moretti said one of the new employees is replacing a departed sales person. The other two are filling newly created positions. Posman and Albert are both experienced in sales, though not at lumber yards, per se.

Albert was an outside salesperson for a paint and small hardware store who "hasn't worked in the building supply side but understands contractors and their needs," Moretti said.

FRIDAYS: September luau is planned

▼ Continued from PG. 1

decided to wear it to work the first Friday he was back. "I was going to wear the (red uniform) vest over it, but when I put the vest over it, it really clashed, so I just wore the shirt," Moretti said.

The tropical look impressed some of the other employees, who asked Moretti if they could follow suit. He agreed to relax the company dress code on Fridays, and soon realized the festive attire could be good for business as well as morale.

"What we decided was we wanted to

Posman, like Dirom, is a former contractor, but Posman's experience in the trade is not as recent.

The New York native first learned about construction in the Navy's Seabees in the 1970s. After he left the service, he did residential construction in Florida, where he had been stationed.

After an accident on the job, Posman got into sales, he said — first in Florida and since 1979 in Portsmouth and Rochester, where he sold cars.

Posman said the automobile business has lost its allure for him. He prefers an environment where he can develop relationships with his customers.

"The one thing this business has that the car business doesn't have is the trust factor," Posman said. "People will keep coming back to Ricci Lumber. There is a lot more loyalty in this business than in the car business. "I think you have to be a little more straightforward in this business. Here, people know exactly what they want."

get contractors involved in a summer-long event," Moretti said. "Every Friday, contractors who come in in some type of tropical garb — a shirt, a hat, something that expresses a summer-time fun theme — will get a participation card."

Those cards will serve as raffle tickets for a grand prize drawing at Ricci's end-of-the-summer luau.

The luau, scheduled for the Thursday before Labor Day weekend, will give Ricci and its vendors a chance to connect with customers in a relaxed, fun-filled atmosphere.

"We'll have a band, some type of tropical foods and some door prizes, including a grand prize that we'll announce two or three days before," Moretti said. "The only way they can get into the grand prize drawing is to come in during the summer weeks on Tropical Fridays."

Moretti said Ricci has used theme parties for contractor nights in the past, and he hopes the tropical promotion will encourage contractors to attend.

"We've been trying to put something together all this year to make it an event," Moretti said.

"It's very hard to get the word out when you're going to have an event like a contractor night. Usually what happens is you send out letters and pray people will show up."

So far, people are showing their tropical colors on Fridays this summer.

Ricci employees (who will have a drawing of their own at the luau) have been participating in greater numbers each week, Moretti said. Contractors are catching on, too.

"If we get more customers having fun once a week, it's something unique to an independent store like ours," Moretti said. "Not everything is so cut-and-dried."



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Ricci Lumber Gazette

NEWS FROM THE RICCI LUMBER COMPANIES

Gault Builders heats up

Area builder uses teamwork, innovation to grow business

Andrew Gault, founder of Gault Builders, says it's all about the team. Adding a little innovation and technology doesn't hurt either.

In four short years, Andrew and his crew have gone from working on small remodeling jobs and sub-contracting for larger builders, to establishing a niche as a custom builder. Andrew credits much of this growth to the economy but is quick to point out that it would not have been manageable without a solid team around him. That team includes his brother Mike a steady and hardworking crew, and Ricci Lumber.

"In a pinch, they're all right there. That's one of the factors that helps us



THE TEAM AT Gault Builders includes (clockwise from top left) Mike Gault, Jake Burbank, Andrew Gault, Rob O'Neil and Bob Churchill.

manage this growing business." Gault says that having the team support, allows

him to work closely with the homeowner. "I never want to be so far away that they can't reach me."

Being able to work closely with the homeowner on their custom homes has helped Andrew find new ways to distinguish his company in the marketplace. By listening, he's been able to tap into some relatively new technologies that homeowners are now looking for.

"There's a house we're working on now that is heated geothermally. And the next house we're working on will use the same type of system. Since I'm able to work so closely with the homeowner and really get into what they want out of a new

Please see **GAULT PG. 5** >

The Value of the Little Box: Conversations Overheard

Summer is upon us at Ricci Lumber. With summer comes long days at the beach, bar-b-cues and clambakes, bike rides and playing frisbee, going out for ice cream and watching Red Sox baseball. Perhaps some fishing and a little golf. What a great time to be in New England!



HAYES

But along with the steady hum of the bugs at night, the clamoring of kids out from school, and the ice cream truck rounding the corner, comes a steady flow of casual conversation around the yard. And as summer and the building season heat up, we know there are a lot of choices in where to buy your building products.

The other day I was in our fastener department trying to locate a box of gun nails for a customer when I overheard another customer talking on his Nextel.

The conversation went something like this: "I'm at Ricci's and they quoted me \$265 for the door. Home Depot's price is \$285. I think I'll buy the door at HD using Ricci's quote. Then I'll get Ricci's price plus 10 percent of the difference."

I couldn't believe that a customer would sell us down the river for about \$2.00.

Apparently, the guy's boss was on the other end of the Nextel and couldn't believe what his runner

Please see **HAYES PG. 4** >

Salespeople bring varied experiences

PORTSMOUTH — New salespeople with diverse backgrounds in and out of the business are making an impact at Ricci Lumber this summer.

Chris Dirom was scheduled to come on board as an outside sales person on July 1, and Don Posman and Frank Albert joined the team as inside salespeople within the last few weeks.

Dirom is a familiar face on the other side of the counter at Ricci. He has been a contractor since 1984 — first in Colorado and more recently in the New Hampshire Seacoast region.

Ricci Vice President and General Manager Pat Moretti said Dirom is not the first former contractor he has hired, and the transition from customer to employee can be a mixed blessing for the company.

"On the one hand, I'm losing a good customer," Moretti said. "But I also know what I'm getting. I've never had a complaint from one of his customers. I know his work ethic.

"He piqued my interest mostly because he's so versatile. Everyone who meets him, likes him."

Dirom has been working on his own as

Please see **SALESPEOPLE PG. 8** >

Paul, Bernice Busque remembered

By **MARY KAY LINSKOTT**

PORTSMOUTH — The Seacoast area recently lost not only a well-respected contractor, but also a hard-working volunteer and loving husband and father.

Paul Busque, of Paul's Siding Specialists, and his wife Bernice died in a hotel fire while vacationing in Rome in May.

Their tragic loss is felt here at Ricci Lumber and all over this community.

Paul and his wife were active members of the town of Newington, the Knights of Columbus and Auxiliary, St. Catherine of Siena Parish and Marriage Encounter. They leave behind five daughters and 10 grandchildren. As testament to the kind of contractor Paul was, many of his customers attended his funeral and remarked on the kind of man he was and the good work he did.

Please see **BUSQUE PG. 7** >

Fridays are 'casual,' purposeful

PORTSMOUTH — Ricci Lumber has a long tradition in New Hampshire's Seacoast region, but it is other shores that will come to mind this summer during the company's Tropical Friday promotion.

Tropical Fridays are the brainchild of Ricci General Manager and Vice President Pat Moretti, who was inspired on a trip to California for a seminar this spring.

"When I was out there, at one of the hotels I stayed at all the employees were dressed in tropical shirts, and it created a fun, relaxed atmosphere," Moretti recalled recently.

Moretti returned from the West Coast with a tropical shirt of his own and

Please see **FRIDAYS PG. 8** >



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Industry is hit hard by inflation

By PAT MORETTI

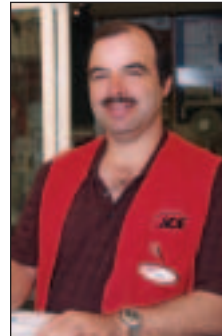
We've all experienced it at the gas pump recently, seen it at the grocery store and paid more at the lumberyard. Inflation, at least in the short term, is spiraling out of control. I, like you, watch in awe at the daily news not reporting to the double digit increases in building materials. It wasn't until fuel prices reached new highs that they even reported on the possible return of inflation.

For more than a year now, our industry has felt the impact of major price increases, product shortages, and longer lead times.

Besides increasing the builder's costs, these factors have forced builders to look for alternatives. Though some of these products are equal to or perform better than their original choice, many of these products are inferior. Weaker warranties and inconsistent quality are the most common quandary facing a builder. As a lumberyard, we try to offer a constant supply of all the products you need on a daily basis.

When a product becomes slow in the pipeline and we are faced with the possibility of not having it for you, we have to make a conscience choice. Our preferred method is to find another source for the exact same product. Sometimes we can pull that hypothetical rabbit out of our hat, filling our

inventory shortfall without you ever knowing. If this method fails, we begin the search for the next best alternative. The intention is to buy a product of equal or better value, but many times this is not the case. For the same reason we didn't sell it in the first place, the product usually has some sort of



MORETTI

quirk that made us overlook it before. This doesn't mean that it won't perform to industry standards, but as many builders know, those standards are subject to making the product to the bare minimum requirements and those that exceed them.

Sort of like those morning coffees you drink, there are those cups that you just love to drink and there are others you just drink because you need to. Paying a bit more for something you enjoy is always better than paying less and throwing half of it out. Of course that is if you can even find what you like when you want it.

So what is the cause and effect of all these products shortfalls and exponential price increases? No one thing can be blamed for the overall implosion of our

construction and building materials. It's a lot of small factors that seem trivial by themselves, but strung together they create a vivid picture of today's besieged economy. Last year we saw what consolidation of manufacturers and vendors can do to influence the production line with plywood. Fewer producers controlling more of the production can reduce output thus forcing shortages and higher prices.

This trend toward merger and acquisition has continued into this year with a fevered pace in many different sectors of the supply line. Unification of suppliers reduces a building material yard options to buy product while strengthening the manufacturer's ability to control supply and demand. There have

been cases where merged manufacturers pick and choose an exclusive retail outlet, eliminating competitive pricing and creating a windfall for both the chosen retailer and themselves. Though this may not be an unusual practice when a product is new to the market, it's a little bit tougher to take when you've been building the brand name, only to have it stripped from your shelves.

Another big factor in the current situation is freight and how to get the product to and from the distributors. Back at the beginning of last year, the Federal Government enacted new laws to create safer highways for all drivers. Included in these laws were new rules

Please see MORETTI PG. 4▶

Remodeling association reminds homeowners to beware of scams

DES PLAINES, Ill. — The National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) reminded homeowners recently that along with warm weather often come the home improvement con artists.

As welcome as a spring blizzard and often as blustery, these con artists show up at your door offering an array of services repaving your driveway to roof repair, and usually demand a hefty down payment up front. They might offer a "great deal," based on using materials left over from a previous job, but homeowners should remember that a "great deal" isn't always what it seems.

Frequently, these fly-by-night operators drive vehicles with out-of-state license plates, or set up temporary offices from which they can move quickly once authorities start looking for them.

Before writing that check, and especially before allowing any unknown individual into your home, NARI suggests that you:

- ◆ Get the name and address of the company that person allegedly represents.
- ◆ Get all details of the offer in writing and carefully review it. Be sure you understand everything in the contract and that any verbal promises made are

included in the contract.

◆ Determine how long the company has been in business and call organizations with which the contractor is affiliated, such as NARI or other trade associations, to determine the firm's legitimacy.

◆ Ask for references and contact each one.

Remember that any legitimate company that wants your business will be more than willing to allow you the time to do your homework. Don't fall prey to high-pressure tactics such as "this is the only chance you have" or "by tomorrow the extra materials will be gone."

Be skeptical if they....

- ◆ Come to your door unsolicited.
- ◆ Use high-pressure sales tactics.
- ◆ Request full payment before completing the work.
- ◆ Give a post office box without a street address or phone number.

Consumers can also call the NARI National hotline at 800-611-NARI and request a free copy of NARI's brochure, "How to Select a Remodeling Professional," or visit www.RemodelToday.com and click on the homeowner's guide for more information.

Mortgage rates likely to keep favoring buyers

By JONATHAN DIENHART

The 30-year mortgage rate remained nearly unchanged for the second consecutive week, edging up two points to an average of 6.32 percent in the week ending May 21.

The last two weeks of stability followed eight consecutive weeks of increase in which rates jumped from 5.38 percent low on March 18 to 6.34 percent on May 13.

Year-over-year, rates this week were 101 basis points higher than the 5.31 percent of a year ago, and 44 basis points lower than the 6.76 percent of two years ago.

Regionally, rates were lowest in the Southeast, averaging 6.25 percent, and were highest in the North Central Region at 6.39 percent.

Over the past several months, positive economic news has heightened fears that inflation may increase and interest rates may follow.

While the rise in mortgage rates has been anticipatory due to expectations for increasing inflation, should there be more strong job growth the Fed will likely consider a rate increase within the next several months.

Though we expect mortgage rates will still remain relatively low in an historical sense for the time being, the revival of the labor market will result in a continued rise in mortgage rates as the year progresses. However, so long as mortgage rates do not increase too rapidly, they should remain in the comfort zone for most homebuyers in the short term.

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www.MeyersGroup.com

TECH TIPS

By Bill Allen

W.A. Allen Consulting

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NAHB
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New report confirms durability of steel in variety of climates

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Life expectancy of more than a millennium and minimal loss of coating after years of exposure were two indicators cited in a report available through Steel Framing Alliance that confirms steel viability under a number of climatic conditions.

The five-year research initiative, titled Galvanized Steel Framing for Residential Buildings, was sponsored by the International Lead and Zinc Research Organization and completed by the National Association Home Builders Research Center. Its chief objective was investigating the corrosion performance of metallic-coated steel-framing components in steel-framed homes.

Four sites were chosen so that field results would be applicable to a large selection of homes and climates. They were Miami; Leonardtown, Md.; Long Beach Island, N.J.; and Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

Among the findings: steel with industry-standard galvanizing had a life expectancy as high as 1,260 years, and that the fastest coating corrosion rate observed was a loss of only 0.04 grams on Galfan plate samples.

The 55-page Galvanized Steel Framing for Residential Buildings details the methods and measures used at all four sites to rate life expectancy and corrosion



STEEL FRAMING PROVES a viable plan for construction in many different climates, according to a recent study.

rates. Steel Framing Alliance will continue to issue reports as the study continues.

The complete report is available on the SFA Web site, www.steelframingalliance.com. Members may download it at no charge from the Members Only page.

The Steel Framing Alliance is an association of more than 350 companies and organizations with the mission of enabling the widespread use of steel framing in residential and commercial construction.

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., SFA provides education, publications, technical support, research and development, and market development programs to companies representing the full spectrum of manufacturing, construction, design, distribution and professional services.

New online span calculator features 2001 NDS supplement

Designed and created by researchers at Washington State University, the American Wood Council's new online span calculator has two operating modes.

In the first mode, you input the material(s) and cross-sectional dimension of the lumber and the calculator gives the maximum span.

In the second mode you input the material and span length and the calculator gives you the proper cross-sectional dimension to use.

Options for exterior conditions, such as incised lumber, and wet service are included in both modes.

Mode one includes minimum bearing length and allowable design stresses used for the species chosen.

Mode two returns a variety of cross-sections ordered by grade for the species, options, and span selected.

For more information, go to <http://www.awc.org/> and click on the span icon at the top right side of the page.

BUSQUE: Contractor will be missed

▼ Continued from PG. 1

We here at Ricci Lumber will miss Paul's good humor and ever-present smile.

Once he came to the desk to place an order while he was eating a candy bar. When Wendy told him it was hard enough to understand him without his

mouth full, Paul laughed along with the rest of us.

Paul's business will continue to operate with the same efficiency, industry and good humor, only now it will be run by his daughter Lisa, his son-in-law Michael and his brother-in-law Maurice.

Paul would be pleased.

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Classified ads for August/Sept. issue are due prior to August 1.



DATES TO REMEMBER

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 Jacob Javits Convention Center
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Austin, Texas
 Information: www.nahb.org

Building Systems Council Showcase

October 31-November 3
 The Hilton Austin
 Austin, Texas
 Information: www.nahb.org

The Remodelers Show

October 7-9
 Chicago, Ill.
 Information: 972-536-6313 or
www.remodelersshow.com

2nd International Housing Conference of the Americas

November 7, 2004
 Four Seasons Hotel
 Mexico City, Mexico
 Information: www.nahb.org

International Trade Fair for Kitchen & Bath, Plumbing, PVF, Heating & Air Conditioning

October 14 - 16, 2004
 Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, Boston, Mass.
 Information: 770-984-8016 ext. 413

2004 Custom Builder Symposium

November 12, 2004
 Renaissance Esmerelda Resort
 Indian Wells, Calif.
 Information: www.nahb.org

2004 Building Systems Councils Showcase (Trade Show)

October 31, 2004

••• BOOK WORM •••

Basic Principles for Construction
By Mark Huth

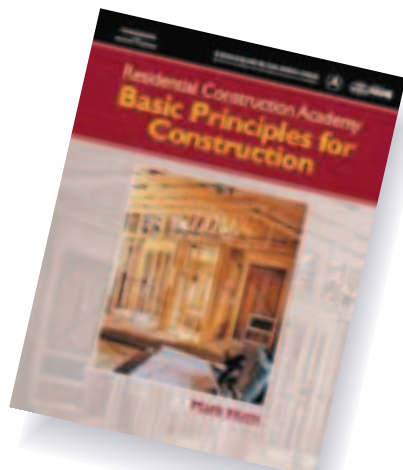
Publisher: Delmar Learning
Format: Hardcover
Pub. Date: 2003
Price: \$37.95
NAHB Member Price: \$34.15

About the Book:

A primer for the more comprehensive craft trades titles in the Residential Construction Academy Series, it thoughtfully covers several areas including mathematics, print reading, communications, workplace skills, safety, common tools and careers in the field.

The Home Builders Institute, the workforce development arm of NAHB, developed the basis for this title, the Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Training (PACT) curriculum, and contains a comprehensive overview of the basics of residential construction.

Extensively illustrated and succinctly



written, chapter-opening objectives start readers on their way as they move through content that develops their skills and ability to achieve those objectives. A host of activities engage readers in functions typically encountered on the job.

Videos and CD-ROMs are available to supplement the text and make learning engaging and interactive.

Available at www.builderbooks.com

Homeowners show increased interest in laundry rooms

Home builders group conducts survey to find what people want in washing area

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Gone are the days when homeowners have to lug their laundry to a Laundromat, down three flights of stairs, or out to a cold, dimly lit garage.

In a National Association of Home Builders consumer preference survey, 95 percent of respondents said they either desire or must have a separate laundry room in their new home. According to members of the NAHB Remodelers Council, homeowners also want an expanded space that can serve as a multipurpose work area for more than just washing clothes.

“Today’s laundry room has moved upstairs into the living quarters, and it is spacious, practically rivaling the kitchen in finishes and gadgets,” said 2004 Remodelers Council Chairman Douglas L. Sutton Sr. of Sutton Siding and Remodeling, Springfield, Ill.

“People want comfortable workspaces no matter what activity they are doing, and they don’t want to lug laundry up and down stairs.”

The newest trend in laundry room remodeling reflects homeowners’ demand for convenience while doing this chore. Laundry rooms are moving into spaces adjacent to kitchens, bedrooms or bathrooms, according to Remodelers Council members.

They report that some homeowners want their laundry room to blend in with the rest of the house, with crown moulding and hardwood or tiled floor to match adjacent rooms.

That’s not all remodelers are asked

‘Today’s laundry room has moved upstairs into the living quarters, and it is spacious, practically rivaling the kitchen in finishes and gadgets’

**Douglas L. Sutton Sr.
Contractor**

to deliver in today’s laundry rooms.

- ◆ People want more counter space to fold, iron or sew clothes, with granite or Formica counter tops that match those found in the kitchen.

- ◆ Homeowners also want cabinets to store laundry detergent and other products, often in wood finishes normally used in the kitchen.

- ◆ Customers want bigger, high-end appliances—washers and dryers that can handle growing wash loads and even two dryers to keep up with the washer.

- ◆ To give the laundry room a more sophisticated look, many homeowners are creating built-in cabinets or closets to hide the appliances when not in use.

With today’s remodeled laundry rooms, the seven to nine hours most people spend doing laundry each week can be a less tedious and more enjoyable experience.

For more information, please contact NAHB Information at 800-368-5242.

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Businesses need to begin with end in mind

By LINDA LEIGH FRANCIS
lfrancis@pacific.net

While covering the use of financial information to manage a business in one of my classes, I looked over at one of the remodelers, and he was shaking his head. "What?" I asked.

He said, "I have never planned out how much I wanted to make in a year and then used my financial information to see if I was on goal. I just keep hustling work and paying bills.



FRANCIS

I never really know how well I am doing until the year-end accounting."

Stephen Covey's concept of "begin with the end in mind" popped into my head. If there is ever a place to begin with the end in mind, this is it.

In this case, the end where you begin, is determining how much you need to make from your business each year.

You need to consider yourself, your family, and your community. Sit down and figure out how much you need to

support your lifestyle, save for a secure retirement, put away for a college education, vacation, hobby, or fulfilling a dream, tithe your church, pay fines at Rotary, or contribute to the community chest.

Now, ask yourself, what return do you want from your investment in your business? If you took those same assets and made reasonable investments in CDs, bonds, or stocks, how much would you make? This, as a minimum, should be your profit goal for your business.

Next, realizing that your expenses dictate the "end" where you need to begin, add up your overhead costs from your P&L and balance sheet. Add to this figure any increases you anticipate in overhead, such as increases in rent, utilities, insurance, or capital expenditures like a new vehicle.

Divide the total of all your expenses, personal and business, by your historical gross profit margin, and voilà, you have your sales goal for the year! Well, maybe.

Suppose that this sales goal is more than you want or can do because of such limiting factors as a shortage of qualified labor, a slowing economy, or a commitment to your own sanity. Now, you have a choice; modify the end you

have in mind, or think about how you can increase your gross profit margin.

You can increase your gross profit margin in primarily two ways.

First, relentlessly control your direct costs. Wasted materials, poorly scheduled personnel, callbacks, warranty work, and high workers' compensation costs all increase direct costs, which decrease your gross profit and gross profit margin. Manage these more effectively, and watch your gross margin rise as your break-even sales figure decreases.

Second, since some jobs can be bid at higher margins, reevaluate your product mix and niche. Consider diversifying into those niches that will sustain higher margins. For example, market more to high-end residential remodel jobs and less to commercial projects because of the higher margins on the residential jobs.

By beginning with the end in mind, you are more likely to have a business that works for you. You can monitor your progress throughout the year to make sure you end up where you want to end up. By beginning with the end in mind, you can eliminate the nagging doubts about how much work to take or not. Instead, you know you are on a path that will meet your needs. You can have a whole new

way of looking at your business and look forward to a successful year that is taking you where YOU want to go.



FOR MORE practical advice on running your business, read Linda Leigh Francis' book, "Run Your Business so it Doesn't Run You", available by contacting Linda at (707) 485-0162 or lfrancis@pacific.net. Linda Leigh Francis also offers workshops and training on how to manage your construction company. For more information, visit www.LindaLFrancis.com.

New Web site promotes green building practices

By JOHN REFO
refo@GreenBiz.com

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Two leading organizations have launched GreenerBuildings.com, a free, content-rich Web site to provide companies of all sizes and sectors with information and resources on the full spectrum of environmental issues related to buildings and facilities.

GreenerBuildings.com, a partnership between the U.S. Green Building Council and the National Environmental Education & Training Foundation's GreenBiz.com, is designed to help companies understand the business case for green building and access organizations, tools, case studies, news stories, and other resources related to greener building practices.

Visitors to GreenerBuildings.com can find information on a range of topics, including architecture and design, building materials, energy use, facility management, interiors, land use, waste management, and water use.

The site also includes a calendar of green-building events, a series of backgrounders on green building topics, and guest columns. With the click of a mouse button, the user's view of the site can be reorganized according to the credits that make up the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED green building standard.

"I can't think of a single subject within the entire environment-based field that

has as massive an education challenge as green buildings," said Kevin Coyle, President of NEETF. "This new Web site is a critical step in meeting that challenge."

"USGBC is committed to providing resources to further the green building movement," said Rick Fedrizzi, President and CEO, U.S. Green Building Council. "Greenerbuildings.com is another tool for reaching even broader audiences with the green building message."

The site will be updated regularly, with news, events, guest columns, and new resources added on a weekly basis. Users can keep up to date through a free electronic newsletter, GreenerBuildings News.

Since its founding, the U.S. Green Building Council (www.usgbc.org) has grown to more than 4,000 leading national and international organizations and companies. The Council's membership is comprised of leading and visionary representation from all segments of the building industry including product manufacturers, environmental groups, building owners, building professionals, utilities, city government, research institutions, professional societies and universities. This type of representation provides a unique, integrated platform for carrying out important programs and activities.

GreenBiz.com, a program of the nonprofit National Environmental Education & Training Foundation



THE GREENERBUILDINGS.COM Web site promotes environmentally-friendly development.

(www.neetf.org), provides information and training to companies of all sizes and sectors. It harnesses the Internet to bring authoritative, accurate, and balanced information and resources to the private sector. Its flagship site, GreenBiz.com (www.GreenBiz.com), is visited by nearly 3 million visitors a year and has been acclaimed as a leading resource on

business environmental practices. Sponsors of GreenerBuildings.com include Antron, AT&T, Durra Building Systems, DPR Construction, Holcim, Interface, Mannington, the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance, Sherwin-Williams, and Warner Bros. Studios. For more information, visit www.GreenerBuildings.com.

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HAYES: Small businesses, big value

▼ Continued from PG. 1

wanted to do either. He beeped the guy back and said, "No. Give the order to Ricci. They gave you the best number and that other place is hard to deal with." With a smile I resumed my search for the elusive gun nails.

Everyone knows what's happening in America where small companies are being forced out of business by bigger ones. It seems like all we have nowadays are big chains. The Walmarts, HDs, Targets, and Best Buys of the world are marketing powerhouses. They advertise like crazy, give away a few items and make up the difference and then some on the rest of the products they sell. Remember the days when we had real coffee shops and bakeries? Now you can't drive more than a mile without bumping in to a Dunkin Donuts. I swear they must put high-powered magnets in each shop because my truck seems to be pulled towards them whenever I drive by. How about steak houses? There's Bugaboos, Outback, Longhorn, and a new one called Smokey Bones which is going in next to Pizzeria Uno. And that's just Newington, N.H. (Boy, if Yoken's leaves, the area is really going to miss it, as well as Kevin Macleod's generosity.)

The big chains use their marketing muscle to convince us to spend our

money with them. We are pummeled on a daily basis by advertising touting their low prices and telling us why we should shop at their stores. On the other hand, small companies, like Ricci Lumber, have a modest advertising budget. We rely on our employees and customers to do much of the advertising for us. For example, if a builder comes in the store, places an order for delivery and everything goes smoothly and he's treated with courtesy, respect, and professionalism, then that customer will hopefully tell his friends, neighbors and fellow builders to shop with us. That's what I call the "Ricci force multiplier" in marketing.

Each of us has a choice to make whenever we are about to make a purchase. If we choose to shop at the big chains, then sooner or later we will not have a choice except to shop at the big chains. At Ricci, we want to earn your business each and every day. On behalf of all Ricci & Area associates, I want to thank you for choosing to spend your hard earned dollars with us. We will not let you down. I'd also like to extend our sincere wish for you and your family to have a fun, enjoyable, safe and long summer season.

Ed Hayes

MORETTI: No end in sight for inflation

▼ Continued from PG. 2

limiting truck drivers to less hours per day and per week. Since January, when this law went into effect, freight in this country has been reduced to a mere shadow of its former self. Not a day goes by when we talk to a vendor about an overdue order, that we hear about the shortage of drivers and trucks.

Stories of drivers leaving product on the dock for more profitable loads is not just a rumor, it's a known fact. The laws of supply and demand have even permeated into this service industry as freight companies raise their rates even higher than the fuel prices would dictate. Less time on the road means longer lead times and the backup of freight in the load centers. With freight remaining with the carrier longer, there is less flatbeds available for other loads. The Northeast, according to many sources, is not a profitable run for many of the larger haulers. Since backhauls are limited by the small amount of products our sector of the country produces, these carriers tend to limit their loads unless manufacturers are willing to pay their amplified rates. Of course this rate does get passed on, ultimately ending with the buyer.

An additional factor to the recent price increases is not being discussed that much in this election year. A weaker American dollar across the globe is a huge contributor to the inflation we are current feeling. With less buying power

than we had just a year ago, imported materials are costing us more while exports are costing our trading partners less. One would think that being able to sell more overseas is a good thing, but this is part of the reason for many material shortages. Steel for example, since it cost us more now on the open market, based on our dollar, we are less likely to import product to fill our short term needs. On the other hand, since another country can import steel from America at a better value, they are more likely to place larger orders to fulfill their requirements. Other exporters can and have cancelled commitments to the United States to sell us steel at a higher price or to sell it to an importer willing to pay more. All these factors siphon product from our inventories, leading to the product scarcity and the rapid price increase we are all feeling now.

These are just a few, but major reasons our industry has been so hard hit in the last year. Intervention by those who have created these problems will be needed to stabilize this market. In the mean time, stay informed, keep ahead of product trends and watch the market indicators. Ricci Lumber is working hard to keep the goods in stock when you need them, but there is sure to be times that conditions may necessitate a product shift or stock substitution. It is our goal that these possibilities be minimized and that your continued satisfaction with our operation is achieved.



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RICCI EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Alan Beasley, Outside Sales

Alan Beasley has been with Ricci Lumber for about four years. Prior, he worked for a competitor, but found his way over to Ricci — where he belongs. He puts his years of experience to work for Ricci customers helping them solve problems, locate unique products and in general being an advocate for the contractor within the walls of Ricci Lumber. If you're his account, he's the frontline of service.



BEASLEY

What has impressed you most in the years you have worked at Ricci Lumber?

These guys are just great to work for. There's a focus on making sure everyone, from the floor to the top managers, know what they are talking about. Everyone's willing to pitch in to help a customer. It's a good crew.

What do you think contractors look for in a lumberyard?

Right now, it's help keeping their business moving. There's so much work going on around here that contractors need someone they can count on more than ever. They need us to be at the top of our game.

And what about your personal success...what makes you successful?

It just feels natural to walk the job sites with my accounts. We have fun, joke around a bit. But in the end, if they need something we get it done.

What trends do you see in the

building industry?

No slow down, that's for sure. I mean, who really knows after the election, but for the most part, there are still lots of new homes going up. People say it will level off, which may not be a bad thing. But still, these are good times to be in construction.

What's next for Ricci Lumber?

We need to keep doing what were doing. Keep looking at new products, like Hardi's siding. And, we need to help our contractors stay ahead of the homeowner. There's a lot of manufacturer information on the Internet right now and the homeowner is finding it first. It can make our job more difficult.

Sum up your understanding of Ricci Lumber in one word.

Loyalty.

Loyalty to our customer. Loyalty to our vendors. Our customers' loyalty to us. Loyalty to doing things right. Loyalty.

GAULT: Green building is profitable

▼ Continued from PG. 1

home, I can help spec. out energy saving solutions like this," Gault said.

In geothermal heating, the flow of thermal energy available from beneath the surface of the Earth is harnessed to help heat and cool a home. The soil and near-surface rocks, from 5 to 50 feet deep, have a nearly constant temperature from geothermal heating. Homeowners can use the Earth as a heat source with geothermal heat pumps.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), geothermal heat pumps are one of the nation's most efficient—and therefore least polluting—heating, cooling, and water-heating systems available. In winter, these systems draw on "earth heat" to warm the house, and in summer they transfer heat from the house to the earth, which ranges in temperature from 50° to 70°F (10° to 21°C) depending on latitude.

For the custom home market, it goes beyond "just" heating the home though. In Oregon, there is an entire town that uses geothermal heating to melt snow from the city's downtown sidewalks. Imagine the custom home of the future where no shoveling is required – now there's a big advantage for a New Hampshire builder who can up-sell that feature.

A system for a home approximately 3,000 sf, could add \$30,000 to the price of a new home. But the annual cost to heat that home may only be \$1,000, making payback fairly quick.

"On top of that," Gault said "homeowners are even eligible for a discounted rate from the Public Service of



GAULT BUILDERS' OWNER Andrew Gault, right, works well with Alan Beasley of Ricci Lumber.

New Hampshire (PSNH) if they use these types of energy sources."

Couple that with Energy Star qualified Low-e windows, and today's homes are becoming super-efficient. But more importantly, according to Gault, homeowners are demanding it. The smart builder who can listen to these demands and keep up with the technology will do well.

"Homeowners are learning about these things and asking their builders what to do. Having someone like Ricci, who I can trust to do their job –and having a steady crew – gives me time to work with the homeowner to help them make decisions."

It all comes back to service. Whether you're a builder servicing the customer with innovative ways to harness geothermal energy, or Ricci lumber servicing contractors with hard to find items and over-the-top support, there's no better way to heat up your business.

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