



Front Range Lumber Company

The news you need to make your project a success!

INDUSTRY NEWS

Lumber Pricing

It's almost easier to say what *has not* increased in price over the past few months! Additionally, we are seeing lots of notifications of upcoming price increases. Covering a few key categories:

- Sidings and trim: expect a 5-10% increase early in 2021.
- Cedar: we anticipate increases of 5+% every 60 to 90 days.
- Redwood: spotty increases.

FRAMING LUMBER. While lumber, as a whole, raced upwards most of 2020, September and October saw large decreases in price. As 2020 grinds to an end, prices have firmed back upwards. Again, supply and demand. Import duties on Canadian lumber were decreased, just in time for the cost of logs to be milled increased. As the new year begins, prices are at record highs (again).

METAL PRODUCTS. Slow, sneaky increases in the past and more coming.

EWP. Items like LVLs, I-joists and similar were all upped in price in the 4th quarter of 2020 by the manufacturers. Our best guess is these items will remain stable for at least a few months.

PLYWOOD. Generally, construction grades of plywood are priced higher than waferboards, however they remain at or lower than waferboard/OSB right now as OSB remains very high in price. Mimicking lumber, prices backed off in fall only to roar back in very late 2020 and early 2021.

Availability/Shortages

We expect the supply of MANY items to be very restricted, at least for the first half of 2021. Our best advice is to plan ahead and be flexible.

Certain categories may continue to be especially short. Using treated as an example, there are still specific items that are unavailable within a decent timeline. That we are now in the slower season and still having these issues bodes poorly for 2021. Many items simply cannot be produced as fast as they sell in the busier summer season. Therefore, suppliers must normally build up at least some inventories during winter/spring to carry them through the summer. Simply, this momentum is NOT being built up now as is normal. Even as of late December, we're seeing a tightening of supply and a move towards increasing prices. MANY other categories are following this general pattern: Miratec®, man-made sidings, cedar boards, most fencing items and many decking products.

In fact, many of the aforementioned items are on allocation from the mills/suppliers. Many mills are now directly being impacted from COVID; some cannot run due to lack of manpower – too many missing – sick or quarantined.

Our belief is especially cedar and fencing items will be in very high demand as we turn the corner into Spring.

KENT'S CORNER

What a year, huh, folks? We all have stories of sacrifices and disappointments and we all certainly have our own perspectives and experiences. I sure won't talk about politics, but I will give you some of my thoughts looking back on this hard year as a salesman and one of the owners here.

Foremost, we do appreciate the massive business stay-at-home homeowners (especially) have given us! The huge demand for doors, decking, fencing caught the industry by surprise at a time that was more challenging than normal to fulfill. This led to much waiting for materials, higher prices, and admittedly lower quality products often from wholesalers. I personally apologize to all of you when I did not have as much time to help you as in the past.

We have seen people's expectations change. As prices rose, many expected better lumber. This doesn't work anymore than gas for your car gets better if the price goes up \$2.00 per gallon. Many staying at home did not realize how busy some businesses were, and how this affected how quickly they got what they wanted. They were so isolated, they assumed we would be slow and able to immediately instantly fill their needs. Some of us let all of our anxieties show in dealing with each other. Everyone looks forward to going back to our pre- COVID-19 anxiety levels!

The good news is that many have taken care of replacing doors, decks, fences which they had put off doing. Thanks to all you DIY-ers and contractors out there! We do appreciate you.

We wish you a safe and prosperous 2021.

FRLCO NEWS

Fort Lupton

Hard to believe... January marks the first-year anniversary of the opening of our Fort Lupton location. This larger land space enabled us in 2020 to have more inventory to buffer some of the wild swings we saw in product availability. If you haven't been there, we invite you to stop by.

We be social!

- We are now using social media!
- FOLLOW us on TWITTER:
www.twitter.com/frontrangelumbr
- LIKE us on FACEBOOK:
www.facebook.com/frontrangelumberco
- And, of course, there's a wealth of information on our website:
WWW.FRLCO.COM

BUILT RIGHT

Plywood

For more information on some of the technical terms used in various plywood's; turn to the last page of this newsletter. You may want to keep it as a handy reference sheet.

Hangers

Another reminder, you must use the correct fasteners for any joist hanger you employ. The shear strength, length and diameters are just as important as using the proper hanger. Many heavier hangers and specialty ones include the proper fasteners. See us or the Simpson StrongTie website for accurate information.

R/S Cedar ≠ R/S Fir

Even though most people's perception of a rough sawn board or timber is that it is cedar, in many cases, it's not. In fact, in timbers, Douglas fir is available in a much wider size selection. To economize and depending on your project's needs, going to a Douglas fir timber may be a very valid option. Once aged or stained, in appearance, the fir won't differ that much from cedar. Cedar, of course has more rot and insect resistance; a fir timber is stronger and should not rot anytime soon. Any of our sales staff can quote either or both options for you to compare.

Sanding

We commonly get asked if a certain product is "finish sanded" – briefly, we would rarely suggest anything sold is ready to be stained/sealed/painted when off-the-shelf. Indeed, even careful handling could create a dirt smudge and light scratch in a wooden surface. More realistically, we would always recommend a good surface check and a final sanding or more to obtain the best possible surface possible.

PROFIT SHARING

Supply and Demand

So many of the building materials market conditions we're seeing go back to plain and simple supply and demand. In many cases, there is just not enough supply to feed the demand that's out there. (See related article concerning product shortages.) There are a myriad of reasons contributing to both sides of the equation. Here are just a few:

SUPPLY...

- Trucking issues are delaying the flow of material through the distribution chain.
- Supplies of logs to the mills are restricted, especially due to forest fires, poor weather, and trucking.
- Mills are operating at lower levels because of their own COVID issues.
- Trade agreements continue to interfere and/or add to the price of wood products.

DEMAND...

- COVID – stay-at-home customers are not spending money on eating out or travel. Instead, they are looking out in their backyard and working on new decks, fences and pergolas (or a whole list of other projects).
- Pent-up demand from projects put off for too many years (fences are a great example).
- Housing starts are at relatively high levels.
- At least some sectors of the economy are fairly busy – housing as an example.

Door Issues

Try as hard as we do, we continue to see not only delays in getting doors of all types shipped but also a much higher percentage of damage, partial ships, incorrect items shipped and so on. We're at wits end and ask that you remain patient and flexible. The largest issue we have is when a customer does not order a new door until it's needed to install, at which point everyone is micro-timing, relying on everything working perfectly. We're sorry to say that especially in the door world, few things are working at all, let alone "perfectly."

PRODUCT NEWS

Decking

FRONT RANGE LUMBER has brought in a new decking product – Alaskan Yellow Cedar in the 5/4x6 size. Normally Alaskan Yellow Cedar (AYC) is MUCH more expensive than Western Red Cedar (WRC), but with changing circumstances, AYC is now a less expensive option. Stronger than most cedars, AYC provides a denser, structural decking that is light in color. Therefore, you can stain your decking a broader range of tones. Since AYC is relatively "blonde", you will need to consider fasteners more carefully. Either choose a hidden fastening system like CAMO or choose a color of screw that will match the eventual color of the deck after staining/sealing.

Sugi Cedar

In the absence of other cedar products, many alternatives are popping up. One of those is a Japanese cedar called Sugi. We are seeing this and other options come into the marketplace as availability AND price of normal items becomes more restrictive. This is a very developing storyline; it might be best to check with us as your need arises for the most up-to-date information. The other standard advice is repeated here: you don't have to be a lumber expert to determine many different quality aspects. We ALWAYS recommend you see what you're considering buying before finalizing a purchase decision. Product details as proper milling, open holes, thickness and color are all very discernable to anyone.

Hardwoods

Buying hardwoods is different in many ways than purchasing other wood products. The huge variety of hardwoods starts the adventure, but remember that each board has very unique grain patterns, coloring or special effects. It's always best to come in and see for yourself this large spread in appearance, characteristics, and yes, price. Several specific wood types that seem especially popular now with our customers are wormy maple, purpleheart, zebra-wood, and walnut.

TAKING STOCK...

S4S Cedar

While most cedar comes rough sawn, **FRONT RANGE LUMBER** inventories an array of smooth sawn cedar items and the list is growing. We are adding 1x4 and 1x6 in 8' lengths. We are also adding multiple sizes of s1s2e cedar in 2x8, 2x10 and 2x12. This is in addition to 2x2, 2x4, 2x6 and 4x4 items which are currently in our stocked inventory. By the way, s1s2e means smooth one face and both edges, leaving the other face as rough sawn. The rough sawn face is the only face that is graded.

Remember, very few suppliers carry the breadth of inventory in cedar in 1x, 2x and timbers. Look to **FRONT RANGE LUMBER** for all your cedar needs.

Ozark

We've set up a new relationship in obtaining "Ozark" aromatic cedar closet lining and, contrary to many other items, we were able to substantially LOWER the price. This comes in convenient 4' packages, containing 15 square feet of coverage. All pieces are shiplap edged on the ends and sides for a completely interlocking joint. This is a great fixer-upper or add-on project that's quick, easy and doesn't become a big "production". Installation requires very few tools and has easy-to-see benefits for you and future users. Just an occasional quick surface sanding brings instant results in insect resistance and attractive scent.

Penofin®

FRONT RANGE LUMBER is one of the largest dealers of the acclaimed Penofin® deck stain in the area. We stock in the red and blue series both single gallons and 5-gallon buckets in a wide range of colors. In addition, we carry the VERDE® series which has no odor, an extremely low amount of volatile organic compounds (VOC) and is environmentally sound. One of the lesser-known details of the "Blue-label" is that it was reformulated in 2020 to lower its VOC content.

Wide Boards

We constantly get asked for wide boards. As a rule, even in common lumber, the widest you'll find is around 11-1/4" (a nominal 1x12 for example). There are practical reasons for this, starting with the obvious one that the tree(s) from which wide boards are cut must be even wider in diameter than the board. As a general rule, the wider the board, the more likely it is to cup, warp, split and twist. Cupping and cracking are highest on the list.

Boards generally only come in widths up to a nominal 1x12. To get a board WIDER than that, usually the only option is to glue-up (like a butcherblock effect). Another possible option is to use plywood, especially high-grade Baltic birch plywood.

Baltic Birch Plywood

FRONT RANGE LUMBER stocks the full range of Baltic birch plywood from 1/8" to 1" thicknesses. While this variety of plywood comes in 4x8 sheets, the far less expensive way to purchase it is in the 5x5 sheet size. A large factor in the cost of this plywood is freight, as it comes from Finland, Russia, and the surrounding area. The containers in which the plywood are shipped are best utilized with 5x5's. Sending only 4x8 sheets does not maximize the room within the container (fewer pieces/amount of product per container), but the freight costs remain the same. Therefore, the freight on a per sheet basis computes higher on the 4x8 sizes. So, if you're cutting up into smaller pieces, 5x5 is the way to go.

Ice Melt

Though difficult to find, we now have plastic pails of ice melt available. Having the plastic pail is much easier to handle, store and spread as opposed to the more common plastic bags. Let's face it, once that bag is opened or torn, the ice melt product dribbles out everywhere!