



Front Range Lumber Company

The news you need to make your project a success!

INDUSTRY NEWS

Lumber Pricing

Lumber is everywhere, but as we repeatedly say: it's all about supply and demand. Overall, right now, there's just too much supply and not enough demand. Mills are restricting output however with other market factors and weather are working to tamp down demand. It's a vicious cycle. Framing lumber prices have risen a bit since the first of the year, but in the bigger picture, that framing lumber is somewhere in the less than half of last year at-this-time range, prices are still relatively "cheap". Of course, other categories of wood products don't necessarily beat to the same drummer. LVL and I-joists have declined in price; Redwood is stable; and Cedar is way less than 6 months ago except for higher grades (see below).

Our best advice remains the same – stay informed. Get an updated quote if you're using older numbers. Be ready for constant price movements, perhaps in both directions – even if the changes are small. We believe as the year grinds on, lumber will increase across the board, although we don't expect any massive shifts as we've experienced over the past three years.

Finally, diesel fuel remains high. This factor alone will prop up prices of lumber – AND the entire range of products we all use – including groceries!

KENT'S CORNER

I just realized after many years "Kent's Corner" sounds kinda kitschy, but I kinda like it! We print these newsletters for counter distribution at our stores and have a long e-mail list. These go back decades and are readable on our nice website. Contact us know if you know somebody who would like to be on the e-mail distribution list.

Have you noticed that some old styles are coming back? Nothing is constant except change! "Mullet" hairstyles are back a bit, for better or worse. And maybe bell bottoms? Not sure I would look as good in them now as during the *Disco* years! In our door business, black hinges on doors are now popular. Luckily, they are the same price as other finishes. Polished brass hinges, long dead, are coming up occasionally. I have had customers looking for 1970's style dark prefinished paneling. And another customer is staining all his pine baseboard and door casings almost black. Black windows are hot. Just remember not to paint an exterior wood door black; you will lose the manufacturer's warranty!

Remember, we have been around since 1965, and have seen many trends. Shaker style doors (think flat panels) were all the rage for the past 5 or 10 years, but now more varieties are gaining interest. And while doors and moldings have been paint grade (meaning already primed), demand is now shifting back to stain grade. These changes obviously affect prices and availability. Wholesalers constantly shift their stock to what is currently more popular with users.

The window season unexpectedly ended last summer. Normally fall and early winter are the busiest times of the year for windows. Right now, it feels like many homeowners merely waited until now to get excited about window replacements. BTW, the first thing you notice with new windows is how quiet your rooms are. Think about it: better quality windows not only provide a better insulative value but also reduce exterior sounds.

Next time I write, Spring should be here and not just looming!

FRLCO NEWS

Training

Driving to and from your daily destinations, you've probably heard a few commercials on the radio from companies bragging that their employees have gone through 200 hours of training. The inference is that after this amount of time, this staff are experts. We take issue with this thinking – at least in our business. We are constantly learning; members of our staff with 20 or more YEARS of experience must—and are—learning more every day.

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
- See us on INSTAGRAM: www.instagram.com/frontrangelumber/
- And, of course, there's a wealth of information on our website: WWW.FRLCO.COM

TAKING STOCK...

LVL

Simply put: **FRONT RANGE LUMBER** has it. 5-1/2", 7-1/4", 9-1/2", 11-7/8", 14", 16" and 18" heights. All 1-3/4" thick and having a 2.0 MOE rating.

Joist Hangers

We may not stock every variant of bracket you need to build a work bench, but we DO carry a large assortment of "real-world: **HANGERS** for larger projects. These include concealed flange, exterior coated, triple or "quad" hangers, skewed and sloped, those for rough sawn lumber and the fasteners you'll need to reach meet maximum load values and code requirements.

No Old Growth Cedar (Wides, Timbers)

The harvesting of larger and old-growth cedar logs up in Canada has been severely restricted. As much of the wider board and higher-grade items come from these logs, the supply of higher grades and/or wider boards is still limited AND prices remain relatively high.

Aspen

We get about a half dozen requests for aspen wood products every month. Aspen is a tough wood for several reasons. The first of which is that there simply are not many straight, decent sized aspen trees to cut down. Further, those trees must be in areas where logging is even allowed. The next issue is the accessibility and the costs to harvest those logs. Perhaps the last major piece to the puzzle is that when milled, aspen logs generate a very high proportion of low-grade material (which no one wants) compared to the amounts of even a decent “grade”, let alone something which could be interpreted as “clear.”

Blue Stain

Many of the same issues which face aspen are similar to those in producing beetle kill/blue stain. While 20-40 years ago there WERE lots of stands of beetle kill afflicted trees to harvest, the largest solution was to “cut our way out of it” while simultaneously taking measures to limit spread of the beetles and the virus they carry that infects the trees. Fast forward 20 years and the supply of decent logs to yield these desired boards has dwindled substantially. We HAVE “cut” our way out of the problem AND the beetles have been controlled far better through insecticides and other methods. Remember, there are no commercially sized sawmills in Colorado. So, despite seeing all those dead and dying trees going up I-70 westward, there’s no-one around to mill them. Refer to our website for more information.

½” Pine

Traditionally used to build drawer sides and backs, ½” thick pine is very difficult to find. **FRONT RANGE LUMBER** does stock these boards in a nominal 6” width in 8’ and 10’ lengths.

Shiplap Pine

We stock 16’ lengths of 1x6 “nickel gap” #2 knotty pine siding/paneling.

Black Lag Screws

Need to match those fancy black joist hangers, angles and straps? **FRONT RANGE LUMBER** carries a selection of black lag bolts and washers to match. While typically painted versus powder coated like the hangers, these bolts will match up far better in use than plain steel fasteners. Over time these may need a touch-up application to maintain their appearance.

BUILT RIGHT

A Brief History of Siding

“In the beginning...” going back more than 30 years ago, the Masonite brand supplied the overwhelming majority of hardboard siding into Colorado. They ceased production almost 30 years ago. Since then, two brands: Truwood (Collins Products) and LP (Louisiana Pacific) carried most of the patterns and sizes Masonite produced. However, each brand “interprets” the wood grain, the spacing, groove pattern, primer color and so on differently. Therefore, EXACT matches are tough (always have been).

Fast forward to 2020.... LP converted to a OSB substrate instead of hardboard and stopped production on several more patterns. And now in 2023, an EXACT match on hardboard siding is probably just not possible. While the general pattern and look of the siding available today is very similar, it’s not exact. Let’s face it – installing new, even exact matched siding next to other pieces which have been in the weather for decades – the difference can be glaring.

In summary, many patterns just aren’t being produced. An exact match is nigh impossible. Our best advice is to buy what you can. Maybe use the new pieces where they are less noticeable (smaller wall, behind a bush, etc.). Take pieces from behind a bush or otherwise and use those in locations where it is really noticeable, and an exact match is demanded.

Deck Plans

It’s almost *Spring* which means it’s deck season. We’re not very hot on most deck estimating software because most have serious faults in them and frankly, most decks are very straightforward and can be planned and estimated on the “paper napkin” method. The one estimating package we like is offered by Simpson StrongTie, the leading manufacturer of joist hangers and related items. Here’s the link to that one:

<https://www.strongtie.com/products/go/software/deckplanner>

Cold Weather

The cold weather really impacts the construction industry for many obvious reasons, but here’s a few you may not know about...

- Treated lumber takes longer to process since after the treating solution has been pressured into the wood, the wood is placed on a drip pad until any extra fluid drips off. While in the summer season, this step can be done in hours, in the winter, it may take days (or weeks).
- Trees cannot be harvested if the snow is too deep in the forest due to access and machinery issues.
- Ever drive a forklift?? The weight is over the rear wheels, but the “drive” wheels are in front.
- Cold adhesives or caulking either are very hard to get out of the tube or they just won’t set up correctly. In some cases, a low temperature version is available, but generally is more expensive!
- Some types of trees can only be harvested in the winter: holly is an obscure but good example.
- Milling operations must “warm-up” the wood before milling it as the wood literally is harder when hard. For example, even milling something as simple as 1x6 T&G pine, the raw boards should warm up before milling.
- Ever been around an auto parts store during a real cold snap?? The line is out the door when car and truck owners needing a new battery!
- Just like paint and similar items, many construction adhesives are

hard to get out of the caulk tube. Likewise, products like flashing tape and related don't adhere or don't adhere as well in the extreme cold.

- Along those lines, options are available in a low (or High) temperature version. However, these are generally much more expensive and not as readily available.

Treated Lumber

For treated lumber you purchase, we suggest using an end coat sealer. Assuming you are cutting boards to a more exact length needed by your project, when cut, this leaves an untreated area available for rot, etc., to start. For comparison, this is similar to cutting into a loaf of bread: the inside doughy part will dry out fast! The inside of the board, by definition, was not directly treated like the "crust" or outside surfaces of the board. This sealer comes in quarts and gallons and can be painted on after cuts are made; the board can be immediately used. (Use a cheap, disposable brush).

Picket Quantity

While picket QUALITIES vary significantly—primarily in the thickness, whether "green" or dried, how knotty and so on—the width generally is consistent at 3-1/2" or 5-1/2" (nominal 1x4 and 1x6 respectively). This is not always the case, but the width is pretty common. Therefore, determining the quantity of pickets needed is easy: 3.5 pickets (1x4) and 2.2 pickets (1x6) per lineal foot of fence to be built. For example, if you're building 100 feet of fence in the 1x6 size, you'll need 220 pickets (2.2 times 100). This conversion gets you VERY close to what you'll need, barring unusual circumstances.

PRODUCT NEWS

MDF

As a preamble for the next TWO topics, let's review what MDF is. It's a fine-grained sawdust mixed with resins/glues/epoxies to arrive at a very high grade of "particle board". It is stronger and more versatile in applications than lower types/grades of particle boards. There are advantages to MDF: very stable (won't crack, warp, etc.), very easily milled – even to a routed edge and it

provides a great painting surface. An MDF product is generally less expensive than a "real" wood item. On the flip side, however, it is heavy in weight and while milling/cutting, the fine sawdust is frankly obnoxious.

MDF Moldings

While we can readily special order any molding available in MDF, we generally don't stock any styles. We're not big fans of MDF moldings for two reasons: MDF and water don't get along, therefore installing in kitchens and bathrooms may be problematic. The other reason is that in handling, the piece can easily snap into multiple pieces if not carefully handled. Both pine fingerjoint and MDF molding generally now come pre-primed; on MDF, you'll never have a joint line telegraphing through the finish like fingerjoint sometimes does.

MDF Core

All plywoods are not created equally. Aside from the obvious differences of wood veneers used, thickness and so on – the most overlooked is the "core" of the sheet. The outside layers (or plys or veneers) are of course a wood veneer, but the types of substrates or intermediate layers varies. This is especially the case in hardwood plywood types (oak, cherry, walnut, etc.). There are three common types of cores:

- Veneer core, the most common in construction plywood, is simply a stack of veneers glued together to get the proper thickness. The higher the veneer layer count, the finer, stabler and more easily milled the panel. Veneers are generally laid in different directions to add strength and stability.
- MDF core: other than the two outer most (and visible) layers, the entire core is a sheet of MDF.
- Comp-core is a combination of veneers and MDF layers used together to achieve the desired thickness. This creates a panel with the best of both worlds: a very flat, stable panel, easily milled, but not too heavy or expensive and holds fasteners well.

PROFIT SHARING

Square Footage

Related to the above, an over-looked housing statistic is the average size of homes being built. Recent numbers we've seen reflect the square footage of the average single-family home started in 2022 was down 1.6%. Similarly, multifamily starts were decreased in square footage in the fourth quarter of 2022 by 3.2%. This reduction of square footage being offered is a reflection of higher building costs and builders reducing the footage to control costs and therefore the overall price of housing. For the full year of 2022, 95.6% of new starts for multifamily units were planned for rental. Therefore, relatively few condos and similar units are being built for purchase, putting even more pressure on the entry level housing market. *Note: multifamily reflects apartments, condos and townhomes.*

Product Shrinkage

In the good old days, a big box of cereal had a large amount of content. Fast forward and cereal prices went way up, may never come down, and the box got smaller (or the amount of product in the box got reduced!). Contrast this to a 2x4-8 stud – they are still the exact dimensions of decades ago!

Safety

Everyone strives for safety—no-one wants to get hurt, right? We've teamed with Pinnacol Assurance, the leading workmen's compensation insurer in the state to provide contractors with a booklet of best practices for construction safety. We've included it in this newsletter to the addressee's who seem to fit this category. If you did not get a copy and would like one, please email us at INFO@FRLCO.COM and request one. We'll get one to you and/or work with Pinnacol to get more copies and get this valuable information to you.

CONSUMER NEWS

Car Wash and Credit Cards

We've addressed various ID theft and credit card fraud issues in our newsletter. Here's a unique twist: Watch when you use your credit card at the car wash. When you're done with your car, be

very careful to turn the control switch to OFF. Otherwise, your card is still being charged for the next person and the next and... Said differently, if you're done with your vehicle and merely stop spraying and place the hand nozzle back in the holder, that's NOT stopping your "time" being charged. Even if the next person is totally "honest," you've probably already driven off and cannot be contacted for reimbursement.

Avian Flu

CDPHE reminds Coloradans to avoid wild birds as avian flu continues to circulate in the state, reminding the public not to touch dead birds.

If a dead bird is found on private property, the property owner can dispose of the bird but is encouraged to avoid direct contact with the remains. CDPHE said anyone disposing of remains should wear disposable gloves, bag the remains carefully, put them in an appropriate outdoor (preferably covered) trash receptacle and call their local health department to report it.

If you come across a bird that appears sick, stay away from it and keep pets away as well. Signs of sickness include tremors or lack of coordination, swelling around the head, neck and eyes, lack of energy or movement, coughing, gasping for air, sneezing or diarrhea.

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You can count days or make every day count.

February	
22 nd	Geo. Washington's Birthday <i>Father of our country</i>
March	
3 rd	Employee Day – <i>Thank 'em!</i>
3 rd	National Anthem Day <i>Be proud to be an American</i>
11 th	Worship of Tools Day <i>Guys, you can relate!</i>
12 th	Daylight saving time begins <i>SPRING forward!</i>
17 th	St. Patrick's Day – <i>Wear your green!</i>
20 th	First Day of Spring
April	
18 th	Income taxes due! [see IRS.gov]
22 nd	Earth Day Celebration, come by Lakewood's Heritage Center for more information <i>How BIG is your carbon footprint?</i>
22 nd	Earth Day