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# NEWS

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Mid-America Lumbermens Association • P.O. Box 419264 • Kansas City, Missouri 64141-6264  
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BULLETIN NO. 986

Fall 2011

## *In This Issue...*

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- Sales and Gross Margin Tips
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- BMOC Survey
- 2012 Estimating Workshops
- ...and more

## *Upcoming Events*

### **Missouri Winter Meeting**

Jan. 6, 2012 - Columbia, Mo.

### **Kansas Winter Meeting**

Jan. 19-20, 2012 - Newton, Kan.

### **NLBMDA Legislative Conference**

March 5-7, 2012 - Washington, D.C.

### **Arkansas Spring Meeting**

March 22-23, 2012 - Hot Springs, Ark.

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### **Mid-America Lumbermens Association**

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## *New Service for Members*

Your Mid-America Lumbermens Association has partnered with ICS-National Collection Services to assist members with debt collection. ICS discounts their services to MLA members to provide a cost-effective and reliable method to keep your cash flowing.

ICS-National Collection Services is experienced in the collection of accounts for our type of business. This service was recommended by members who have already benefited from working with them, and the program has been reviewed and approved by the MLA Board of Directors.

ICS offers an approach to debt collection that is professional, persuasive and respectful of the relationship you have with your customers. They employ a two-step collection process that is the basis for their unique approach to collection services. This approach evolved out of their goal to eliminate the reasons most businesses do not use third-party collection assistance: high cost, negative impact on customers, and the inefficiencies of the account management process.

Providing a low-cost, low-impact, easy-to-use collection service enables members to submit accounts for collection at the earliest appropriate time, thereby maximizing the probability of collection. ICS can give you the power of the collection agency at a cost that is less than your own internal efforts, using an approach that will not burn bridges with those customers you wish to keep.

You have the option to engage them on a flat-fee basis or on a contingency basis, whichever works best for you. Either way, MLA members will always receive the lowest discounted rate. Even at the discounted rate, your Association will benefit from your participation, gaining a modest amount of income to help defray our marketing costs and to contribute to the success of your Association. Working with ICS is a win-win-win.

## *Always Professional*

The most important aspect of their overall effectiveness and success (and one of the primary reasons ICS was selected as a service partner) is ICS's professional conduct in the delivery of services. They know how important a good reputation in the community is to the success of a business. They treat every debtor fairly and with respect not only because that is the proper way to conduct business, but it is also the best way to effectively collect the debt.

MLA is pleased to recommend ICS-National Collection Services to assist you with your collection process. If you'd like to know more, please contact: **Todd Elliott, Managing Partner • 918-622-2331/Fax: 918-622-2339 • Toll-free: 877-622-2331 • [telliott@ICS-National.com](mailto:telliott@ICS-National.com)**

## Winter Meeting Set for Newton Kansas

The Kansas Social Activities Committee has put together the 2012 Winter Meeting - Jan. 19-20 in Newton. The event will be held at the new Holiday Inn Express with an interesting line-up of speakers and fun events for dealers and spouses.

### The Chairman's Icebreaker - Thursday, Jan. 19

5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Guy McGillivray, Forest Products Supply, is sharing their meeting room and yard for us to hold the Icebreaker.

### Meeting and Speakers - Friday, Jan. 20

There will be a short meeting on Friday, Jan. 20 at 9 a.m. to discuss committee plans, the legislative agenda and the future growth of the Sunflower Shootout.

### 9:30 a.m. - "We've Gone Social - Have You?" - Sara Scroggins, Social Media Coordinator, MLA

The buzz surrounding social media has not been over-hyped. Sara's presentation will give us an update on this very important trend in the industry and how you can use Social Media to drive business into your yard.

### 10:00 a.m. - Worker's Compensation Insurance - Dan Garcia, Federated Insurance

This may not sound too exciting, but saving money sounds pretty good, right? Have you ever wondered how you can have an impact on your work comp cost? Have you ever wondered how you can lower your w/c mod number? Dan Garcia will share with us a new program that takes advantage of Kansas being a "net reporting state," which could provide dramatic savings on your work comp costs, and in turn, have a positive impact on your bottom line.

### 11:00 a.m. - USDA Rural Development - Tim Rogers, Housing Program Director

Learn about all of the new programs that the USDA has and how one of our fellow Kansas members is using this to grow his business and survive the downturn we have been experiencing in recent years.

### Yard Tour and Spouses Program

A tour of the Forest Products Supply yard is scheduled for 12:00 - 1:45 p.m. We will have lunch and a quick yard tour. There will be plenty of time to ask questions and maybe learn about some of the new products that

Guy McGillivray and his team have available to help you with the ever-changing remodeling market.

### City Tour for Spouses

Spouses will enjoy the day exploring several historic sites in Newton. We will start the tour at the Harvey County Historical Museum. This building is an original Carnegie Library housing local and railroad history.

The next stop on the tour will be the Warkentin House. This is a 16-room Victorian mansion and former home of Bernhard Warkentin. Rounding out the morning will be a driving tour of Newton - seeing historic buildings and landmarks around the city.

Lunch will be at the Breadbasket, home of delicious soups, sandwiches and pies.

### Catch Up With the Spouses

We will catch up with the spouses and/or significant others for a continuation of the "History Tour" of Newton and the surrounding area. We will visit the Kauffman Museum. This museum features the natural history of the Central Plains and the immigration of Mennonites in the 1870s. The last stop on the tour will be the Carriage Factory Art Gallery and Park. This building was originally a factory producing buggy carriages. This museum showcases local and guest artist exhibits.

### Chairman's Reception and Dinner - 6:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Our reception and dinner at Montana Mike's will be the perfect end to an informative and fun-filled day. Montana Mike's is known for classic, naturally aged USDA beef steaks, hand-cut each day.

*If you need more information about the meeting, contact MLA Regional Manager Robert Uhler at 1-800-747-6529.*



## Missouri Winter Meeting Set for Columbia

The Missouri Lumber Dealers Activity Committee (MLDAC) will hold their annual meeting on Friday, Jan. 6, 2012 at the Holiday Inn Executive Center in Columbia, Mo. There is no charge to attend this program.

The program will begin at 10 a.m. and will conclude by noon. There is an optional luncheon at the conclusion of the program for \$18 per person. Our slate of speakers for the meeting includes:

### Social Media 101 – Sara Scroggins, MLA Social Media Coordinator

As you are probably aware, your association has gone “Social.” We will look at how social media is changing the way we communicate with our customers and with each other. We will also look at how you can use this method of communication to drive business into your stores. Sara’s presentation will shed some light on this important and timely topic.

### Missouri Legislative Update – Dale Amick, MLA Legislative Director

In this era of budget shortfalls, and the ever-changing legislative landscape, Dale will give us an update on the upcoming session, and what we can expect in 2012. We will also have a chance to talk about our legislative agenda for the upcoming session.

### Workers’ Compensation Insurance – Dan Garcia, Federated Insurance

Have you ever wondered how you can have an impact on your work comp cost? Have you ever wondered how you can lower your w/c mod number? Dan Garcia will share with us a new program that takes advantage of Missouri’s being a “net reporting state,” which could provide dramatic savings on your work comp costs, and in turn, have a positive impact on your bottom line.

*A registration form for the Missouri Winter Meeting is included with this newsletter. We look forward to seeing everyone Jan. 6 in Columbia.*

*If you need more information about the meeting, contact MLA Regional Manager Robert Uhler at 1-800-747-6529.*

## Retirement Announcement

Sept. 30, 2011

Mid-America Lumbermens Association

### Dear Friends and Customers,

Effective Sept. 30th I will be retiring from Westfall GMC Truck. Over the past 24 years, as a member of the MLA, I have met and sold many of you business and personal vehicles. I always looked forward to the MLA Expos because it was a chance to see many of you face-to-face.

For 20 of the last 24 years, I was proud to be the “truck guy” for the Missouri and Kansas golf tournaments. When Westfall became the “Hole-In-One” sponsor for both tournaments it added to the tournament to have a new GMC pickup parked at a “never easy” par 3 to bring extra pressure for the winning shot. Unfortunately, I never got to hand the keys over for a new truck to a skilled (lucky) golfer.

Westfall GMC Truck just celebrated its 60th year in business, providing transportation solutions for businesses across the U.S. This tradition will continue, and in my place please contact Jim Shull for your truck needs.

It has been a fun run for 42 years in the automotive business and 24 years with MLA, but it is time to move on and try to improve my golf game. Again, thank you for years and years of loyalty and support. I will miss that and all of the friendships that developed during that time.

Best wishes for continued success in the lumber business.

*Larry Lewis, MLA Sales Coordinator*

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## Restricted Use of Hand-Held Mobile Telephones

Effective January 3, 2012, the FMCSA (Federal Motor Carrier Association) and PHMSA (Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration) are amending the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations and the Hazardous Materials Regulations to restrict the use of hand-held mobile telephones by drivers of commercial motor vehicles (anything meeting definition per CFR 390.5; single or combination GVWR of 10,001# or greater).

The restriction of hand-held mobile telephone use by all CMV drivers is based on available data and in line with existing regulations that hold CMV drivers to higher standards.

Any violation of this restriction may result in a civil penalty imposed on drivers in an amount of \$2,750; a civil penalty could be imposed on employers who fail to require their drivers to comply with FMCSRs, in an amount of \$11,000. The regulations derive from the Motor Carrier Safety Act of 1984.

This federal publication was released Nov. 23, 2011 and the rule is effective 30 days from that date. Even if you have a policy against this, you, as employer, will still be held accountable and subject to the \$11,000 fine.

Companies with commercial drivers need to provide a training seminar with all drivers to make them aware of the regulation. This would be a good time to revisit company policy regarding phones, texting, and other regulations coming down the pipeline.

NLBMDA has put together an issue briefing, which is available on their website at:

[www.dealer.org/files/public/Issue\\_Briefing-Handheld\\_cellular\\_Phone\\_Ban\\_12-7-2011.pdf](http://www.dealer.org/files/public/Issue_Briefing-Handheld_cellular_Phone_Ban_12-7-2011.pdf)

## Federated Produces New Distracted Driving Safety Program: "In the Blink of an Eye"

Distracted driving continues to be a public safety issue that costs business owners millions of dollars each year. A 2011 study by Federated Mutual Insurance Company revealed that 50 percent of commercial driving accidents included distraction as a contributing factor – more than weather, failure to yield, and following too closely combined.

Federated has created a new, comprehensive program called, "Distracted Driving – In the Blink of an Eye" to help businesses address the risk exposure distracted driving can have on their companies. The program is designed to help Federated clients reduce claims and the related costs of distracted driving by setting high standards for driving company vehicles.

This program includes a compelling DVD and packet of materials with everything a business needs to conduct an impressive employee distracted driving safety meeting and new employee orientation. Federated marketing representatives will deliver a copy of the DVD and support materials to insured clients beginning in early 2012.



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# New Southern Pine Design Values

On October 7, 2011, the Southern Pine Inspection Bureau (SPIB) announced they were submitting new design values for visually graded Southern Pine dimension lumber to the American Lumber Standard Committee (ALSC) Board of Review. The last major change for visually graded dimension lumber was in 1991 when design values for



Southern Pine and other North American species were published based on In-Grade testing of full-size samples of commercially produced lumber.

According to the Southern Forest Products Association (SFPA), the SPIB has conducted an annual resource monitoring program developed in collaboration with U.S. Forest Products Laboratory (FPL) since 1994. Although the level established to trigger additional testing was never reached, overall trends in the annual test data suggested a possible reduction in values should be recommended. These trends prompted SPIB to conduct a year-long program of testing and data review. SPIB is the first rules-writing agency to submit new values. Rules-writing agencies responsible for other species are in different stages of evaluating design values.

The issue for many is not that SPIB recommended a change in design values, it is that they conducted research and testing for a full year before informing anyone of the potential changes, and then expected the market to adapt in a very short period of time.

At its October 20, 2011 hearing, the ALSC Board of Review announced a second hearing on January 5, 2012 to afford all interested parties an opportunity to comment on the technical aspects of the SPIB recommendation. In making the announcement, the ALSC Board of Review further stated, "Parties should be mindful that the proposed changes are significant and should take steps they deem appropriate in the interim."

The National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association (NLBMDA) has been actively engaged on this issue expressing concerns over the potential impact on the industry of the sudden change in design values. According to **Mike O'Brien**, NLBMDA President, "NLBMDA is pleased the Board of Review is taking the extra time to scrutinize this proposal, which has the potential to greatly disrupt the marketplace at a time when the housing industry continues to struggle to recover. We have been

very concerned that a decision was being rushed without understanding all the potential implications."

A strong coalition of industry representatives attended the October 20 hearing, including NLBMDA, National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), the Leading Builders of America, Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) and Truss Plate Institute (TPI). Some of the key points raised were:

- A key concept is that lumber grade-marks = lumber design values for engineering purposes. Accurate lumber design values are critical to engineers, truss manufacturers, builders, contractors, and other end-users/consumers from an accurate building design perspective.
- While the SPIB data suggest that the Southern Pine region is producing lumber that has lower design values, this meeting opens the door for data review to more fully understand the data and potentially take advantage of the fact that there are regions and lumber mills that have sources of timber that will provide the same design values used today with the same visual grading procedures.
- One reasonable option is to sort out the low-strength lumber during a visual grading process, using existing or new technology that the lumber production experts define, and leave the high strength lumber with the same grades, sizes and lumber design values as we are using today.
- The most logical solution for lumber purchasing businesses, industries, and the public is for the lumber industry to change the grading rules to give them the lumber design values that they thought they have been purchasing all along.

At a subsequent meeting of the ALSC, on November 11th, NLBMDA strongly urged the American Lumber Standard Committee to establish a clearly defined, open and transparent deliberative process around the development of design values for all species of lumber, including Southern Yellow Pine. At its annual meeting in Orlando, when the ALSC received an update from its Board of Review regarding the proposed changes to the design values of Southern Yellow Pine, former NLBMDA Chair and MLA Past

**Continued on next page**

President **Harold Baalman**, the NLBMDA representative on the committee, expressed concern over the lack of early attention and urgency given to the potential reduction in design values for Southern Pine, and took that opportunity to make a motion that the ALSC direct the Board of Review to better define its process and procedures around the development of design values for all species.

Supported by other ALSC members, including the NAHB and the Structural Building Component Association (SBCA), the final motion approved by the ALSC directed the ALSC staff and the Board of Review to review its procedures for purposes of determining the publication of more express, written procedures for the evaluation of design value proposals and other related matters. NLBMDA believes that stakeholders should know what to expect relative to the process at each stage: the development of sampling and testing plans, the review of test data, the proposal of new design values, and the development of final text that become ultimately a part of the grade rules and would be adopted by the building codes.

A report released on November 29 by the Forest Economic Advisors (FEA) predicted that proposals to reduce

some design values for Southern pine could affect demand next year for more than 1 billion board feet of visually graded lumber – at least one-eighth of the Southern pine dimensional lumber milled in 2011 – as well as trigger longer-term changes in the price and popularity of machine-rated Southern pine, engineered lumber, and other types of softwood lumber. If the SPIB's new values are adopted at the January 5th hearing, lumberyard and distribution association executives fear it could automatically depress the value of the Southern pine they have on hand, while building component makers worry about potential lawsuits involving homes that were just built (or are currently being built) to the old standards. Since most Southern Pine is visually graded, the FEA report projects that adoption of the new values could cause an increased demand for machine stress-rated (MSR) lumber.

NLBMDA continues to work with NAHB, SBCA and the Leading Builders of America (LBA) on the current Southern Pine design values proposal in preparation for the Board of Review's next meeting on January 5, 2012. MLA members with questions may contact Frank Moore at [frank@dealer.org](mailto:frank@dealer.org).

Sources: NLBMDA, Southern Forest Products Association, Truss Publications, Inc., and Pro Sales Magazine.

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## Members Gather for Annual Meeting



Greg Stine, BuilderLink, presents his program, "Marketing and Selling to Remodeling Contractors."

Dealers gathered in Kansas City, Nov. 11 for the MLA 2011 Fall Fling. Participants experienced a great meeting with important information presented. Our speakers included Mike O'Brien, NLBMDA President. He updated members on current national issues including the new design values proposed by the Southern Pine Inspection Bureau and current activity in Congress.

Federated Insurance representative, Mike Pennington, presented an overview of workers' compensation insurance changes.

In addition, members heard from Greg Stine with BuilderLink on "Marketing and Selling to Remodeling Contractors," and Bill Sharp provided a "Management Boot Camp."

Thanks to all members who attended and we look forward to seeing you next year at the 2012 Fall Fling, Nov. 8-9, 2012.



NLBMDA President Mike O'Brien gives members a legislative update.

## Thanks to Fall Fling Sponsors

### Presenting Sponsor

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**This meeting would not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors. Please support the companies that support our Association. All suppliers noted with an asterisk (\*) participated in the Dine-Around event.**



2011-2012 MLA President Ken Blackmon addressing the members at the Fling.



Bill Sharp explaining the "Management Boot Camp" to members at the Fall Fling.



# Help LuDPAC Build Good Government

The Lumber Dealers Political Action Committee (LuDPAC), the political action committee of the National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association (NLBMDA), has important information to share with you about our political and legislative issues and activities. However, your written permission is needed before we can send this information. This in no way obligates you to contribute to LuDPAC. Simply sign your name for each year below and return the form. Sign all five years for your convenience!

PLEASE FILL OUT THE INFORMATION BELOW. PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY.

COMPANY NAME	
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Yes, I authorize LuDPAC to communicate with my company regarding LuDPAC's political activities. I understand that my company may only grant prior approval to one trade association per calendar year. I also understand that submission of this completed prior approval form does not obligate me or anyone else in my company to make a contribution. Prior approval is granted for the following years (federal law requires a signature for each year):

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2014
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**PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS FORM TO LUDPAC BY FAX OR MAIL.**

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## Put Numbers to Your Service Claims

By Bill Lee, visit [BillLeeOnline.com](http://BillLeeOnline.com)

In my sales seminars I often ask this question to the audience: Why do your very best customers do business with you and your company?

In answer to this question, I hear many different answers. Here are just a few of them:

- We are like best friends...
- Our competitive prices...
- Our convenient location...
- I practically run his jobs for him...
- Service...

One of reasons I hear is ALWAYS service. I have presented hundreds of sales seminars over the course of my career and I have never failed to hear service offered as one of the primary reasons loyal customers are so loyal.

Let me ask you a question, right here in this newsletter, right now as you are reading it: How good is your service and your company's service?

I'll bet everyone who is reading this newsletter today will answer that you have good service... excellent service... outstanding service...etc.

I'll make you another bet: no one says that they or their company has crappy service. I don't believe I have ever heard a salesperson tell a prospect that they have crappy quality or crappy service. EVERYONE says that they have great service.

### Rules for Discussing Service

Now, put yourself in the prospect's position. With all things being equal and if ALL salespeople who visit them have terrific service and terrific quality, then what is the determining factor as to where they do business? Wouldn't you think it would be price?

Remember I said with all things being equal, meaning that all salespeople have the same good relationship with the prospect, all have equal service and all have equal quality, then what is there left for the prospect to consider? I believe the answer is price.

Now hear this: regardless of how good your service is, to a prospect, that is, a prospect who has never done business with you and therefore never experienced your service, it's EQUAL to your competitors' service. Why? Because you and your competitors claim to have GREAT service. Or GOOD service.

Does this make sense?

Now here are two rules to remember when discussing service:

1. Never speak of service as a generality. Always speak of a specific service.

2. Put a number to your service claims. Example: When discussing service, you might want to refer to your company's track record for on-time delivery. And if you could put a percentage on it, that is, put a number to your track record for on-time deliveries, your claim will have many times more credibility with the prospect.

Better yet, if you could get your prospect to answer the question: How much does it cost you when you have a framing crew show up at one of your jobs at 7:00 a.m. to begin work and they have to wait around two hours for the framing material to show up on the job?

Here's the math:

1. How many framers are on your framing crew?
2. How much do your framers earn per hour?
3. Let's say there are six framers earning \$20 per hour and the material is two hours late. Then  $6 \times 2 = 12$  man hours  $\times$  \$20, so it costs this contractor \$240 in labor when the framing that was supposed to be on the job by 7:00 a.m. doesn't show up until 9:00 a.m.

So if your company could document its track record for on-time delivery, instead of telling a prospect that you have GOOD service, you could tell him that year to date – on average – 93.6 percent of the time your company has material on the job by the time you commit it will be there. This way of making a service claim will increase your odds substantially that your service claim will have some teeth in it and have credibility with the prospect.

Make this slight difference in the way you discuss service and see if it doesn't make a huge difference in how effective you are at closing more sales.

### MLA Calendar of Events

#### Missouri Winter Meeting

Jan. 6, 2012 - Columbia, Mo.

#### Kansas Winter Meeting

Jan. 19-20, 2012 - Newton, Kan.

#### MLA Estimating Workshops -

Members needing more information about the Estimating Workshops should contact Robert Uhler at the MLA offices at 800-747-6529.

# Missouri Legislative Update

The special session has come to a close. The in-fighting in the Senate is worse than the boys and girls in Washington, D.C. They can't get anything out of their own caucus, let alone get something to the floor for a vote. That being said there are a couple of issues that could be very important to us in the upcoming session in 2012.

1) **Incentives for Homeownership** – Both the Historic Preservation Tax Credit and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit survived the special session without being reduced or placed on the seven year sunset option. There is some talk of these being phased out and going through a yearly renewal process with the full legislature having to approve funding. Needless to say, this is not what we need or want. These two programs actually work and help lumber dealers move building supplies to the market. The governor would like to take all of the housing-related credits and dump them into Joplin and the flood areas for next several years. The St. Louis and Kansas City lobbying groups are unlikely to let this happen.

2) **Financing State Government** will be a major issue next year (2012). Missouri will have a fair/flat tax vote that will come by way of the ballot box. According to Dale Amick, Missouri Legislative Consultant, this could have serious implications for our membership. Here is a quick recap from this past year's session:

There were several proposals being offered that would eliminate the Missouri income tax and replace it with an expanded sales tax on goods and services. As of late August 2011, there were 13 constitutional amendments offered to accomplish this. The first nine initiatives would have imposed a sales tax on almost all services with very few if any exemptions; these have been withdrawn. The remaining four exempt real estate services and other professional services as well as a broad range of other taxes (ag-related). According to several independent analysts, the resulting flat/fair tax structure would cause such a severe short-fall in revenue for the state that the next general assembly would be forced to start removing these exemptions to balance the budget.

Because of the uncertainty created by these proposals, the Missouri Realtors Association is putting together a coalition of groups to

fight these initiatives. The battle will be uphill. It will be on the ballot, and most believe that it will pass. The voters will believe this is a tax-reduction, and will not see the other side of the state's revenue shortfall and the eventual tax increases that will be coming in the next session of the general assembly.

Needless to say the 2012 session will be very eventful with some very important issues facing our industry and our members.




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## Building Material Operations Comparison

**A comprehensive review of expenses AND a salary survey in one tool!**

It's time to plan for your participation in the 2012 Building Material Operations Comparison (BMOC) survey. This is the only cost of doing business survey currently being conducted in the lumber and building materials industry, providing you a comparison of your financial data with dealers nationwide. With sufficient participation in our area, we'll be able to provide regional results and comparisons, as well. Since you enter your own data via a secure web site, no one else sees your individual results, yet you have the opportunity to pull dozens of useful reports and your data is stored securely so you'll have access to year-to-year results.

### Here are a few of the exciting features:

- System auto-computes many numbers and highlights potential errors to prevent typographical errors from ruining your analysis.
- A secure environment that conforms to the high SSL standards required for e-commerce. Passwords are encrypted. Information is stored on a server that is ISO9001 compliant.
- More than 90 charts and graphs, many with industry benchmarks and tags showing which way you want your data to trend.
- Ability to store your data from year to year, enabling you to see how you have improved over time.
- Created and managed by regional lumber and building material associations you trust. Your data is safe, secure and confidential.
- Combines cost studies and salary surveys into one program.

Complete information will be sent after the first of the year. Plan now to get involved. At \$200, you can't afford to miss this opportunity.

## Buyer's Guide Now Online

This year, the popular MLA Buyer's Guide went out of print and transitioned to a robust new platform on the MLA web site at [www.TheMLA.com](http://www.TheMLA.com).

Anyone wishing to source products or locate a supplier can go to the MLA online buyer's guide to find what they need. The site enables searches by company, location, type of product and brand.

Suppliers wishing to have their company and products listed may contact the Association at 800-747-6529.



## Announcing

### Lead-Safe Training – Now Available Online

The Mid-America Lumbermen's Association is proud to team with ComplyAbility to bring you – AND YOUR CUSTOMERS – EPA mandated **Lead-Safe Work Practices training online!**

**Who is covered?** Painters, Remodelers, Renovators, Contractors, Plumbers, Electricians, Roofers... All must be "RRP Certified" and use Lead-Safe Work Practices when working in child-occupied facilities or homes built before 1978. To become RRP Certified, individuals doing work that disturbs lead-based paint **MUST** be licensed and take an "RRP" Class from an Accredited Training Provider!

**The course consists of six (6) hours of online and two (2) hours of "hands-on" training.**

MLA members promote this online training to customers that are impacted by the rule and also schedule a "hands-on" class with ComplyAbility.

The regular online price is \$195 per person. **Your customer's cost (because you are an MLA member) is just \$175.** Instruct customers to use the MLA Promotional Code: **MLAAO** when registering to receive the MLA discount.

- Now you (and/or customers) can take mandated Lead-Safe Work Practices training when it's convenient.
- No sitting in uncomfortable chairs, in stuffy rooms, daydreaming or thinking about what must be done when returning to work.
  - Students learn in a non-stressful environment because they have control over the training experience.
  - **No taking time away from their business and no lost income as a result.**
  - Instant access to training manuals, required forms, brochures (*Renovate Right* pamphlet that must be distributed to home owners, etc.).
  - Plus permanent access to these materials.
  - There are many additional benefits to online training!

### Impacted Individuals Must Act Now to Avoid Stiff Financial Penalties!

All of the forms, manuals and other materials are accessible via the ComplyAbility LeadSafeOnline system... Licensed Firm & Renovator Application, Training Verification Record, RRP Rule Handbook, On-the-Job Training Verification Form, and more.

Register @ [www.lead-safeonline.com](http://www.lead-safeonline.com) or call 1-800-708-6460.

# Remembrances

**Byron Deill**, Pittsburg, Kan., died Oct. 12 at his home. Deill started Broadway Lumber in 1952 and Deill Construction in 1948. The construction company built George Netrels School, PSU President's home, Deill's second addition, PSU Weede Field House, as well as many other commercial buildings in communities in southeast Kansas and southwest Missouri. Survivors include Suzy Boldrini of Pittsburg, Kan. The family suggests memorials be given to the American Heart Association. They may be mailed to the Brenner Mortuary, 114 East 4th St., Pittsburg, Kansas 66762.

**James A. Nickles**, 64, passed away November 27, 2011 in Tulsa, Okla. Nickles was the father of Jimmy Nickles, of White's Ace Building Center in Shawnee, Okla. After graduating from OSU, he went to work as a CPA for Peat, Marwick & Mitchell & Co. accounting firm in Tulsa. He worked there for 10 years, and then he started his private practice. Jim was a member of the 2nd class of Leadership Tulsa. He was appointed by Governor Keating to the Oklahoma State Board of Accountancy for two five-year terms. He served as chairman for one term. He was honored as a Life Member of the Oklahoma Society of Accountants on November 16, 2005. The family requests donations to St. Jude Children's Hospital, P.O. Box 2151, Memphis, TN 38101-2151 and St. Francis Hospice, 6600 S. Yale #350, Tulsa, OK 74136-3362.

## 2012 MLA Estimating Workshops

MLA will be conducting estimating and residential material takeoff workshops in February. Contact Robert for more information on the upcoming training opportunities.

In today's highly competitive market, the success of a material supplier relies heavily on the ability to generate quick and accurate estimates. The ability to estimate the material costs of a project is an essential skill for those in the lumber business. This class emphasizes the basic skills needed in estimating material costs.

Whether estimates are being generated by hand or by computer, there are basic principles that must be understood to produce a quality takeoff. The basic math of quantity takeoff methods dealing with length, area and volume and the basic business math of calculating the costs for material profit margin, add-ons, and discounts are some of these essential basics. The class will use residential, small commercial and agricultural plan sets as examples and projects.

### Estimating Class 101

- Estimation as a tool to make a sale
- Different types of estimates
- Basic estimation calculations
- Using an architectural scale
- Basic blueprint reading
- Understanding elevations, floor plans, details and symbols
- Estimating formats and formulas
- Key measurements
- Estimating small projects (decks & garages)

### Who Should Attend

Sales/estimating staff, management personnel, or anyone involved in reading blueprints. It is especially useful to those with minimal skills in reading blueprints.

### Registration Fees

Members: \$125 for one person - \$105 each for two or more from same company

Nonmembers: \$545 for first person - \$495 for each additional staff from same company

Fees include lunch, breaks and handout materials.

Contact Robert Uhler, MLA Regional Manager, 800-747-6529, for more information.

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## Weak Housing Market Beginning to Lean in the Right Direction

A patchwork of good and not-so-good housing and economic data emerged over the past three weeks. Housing measures appeared to start moving in the right direction, but from record low levels.

The advance estimate of real third-quarter GDP growth of 2.5 percent was lowered to 2.0 percent by a sharp downward revision to business inventories. While this is subpar and insufficient to bolster employment growth, it is an improvement over the 0.4 percent and 1.3 percent growth recorded in the first and second quarters of 2011, respectively.

Declines in energy prices — particularly for gasoline at the pump — drove down both producer and consumer prices modestly in October. However, home builders saw a moderate increase in the costs of most of the materials they use in construction.

The Case-Shiller and Federal Housing Finance Agency home price indexes both showed modest growth in the third quarter, although they have been somewhat volatile from month to month, with the former declining a bit and the latter inching higher in September.

### The Single-Family Housing Market Has Recently Seen Small Signs of Improvement:

Builder confidence tracked by the NAHB/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index climbed six points over the past two months to a reading of 20 in November, which is still well below the level of 50 indicating a balanced market.

New single-family home sales were up for two consecutive months, rising in October to a reading that was the 12th lowest since comparable records began in 1963.


After declines for three months in a row, single-family starts rose by a solid 3.9 percent in October, but they were still not appreciably higher than they were in May 2010.

Multifamily starts have performed better, rising almost 90 percent over the 12 months from October 2010 to 2011. Multifamily starts fell 8.6 percent in October — with an even larger 13 percent decline in starts of buildings with five or more units — but this was likely a correction to a more than 50 percent spike the month before.

Existing home sales improved modestly in October, recovering some lost ground from the previous month. The general trend in existing home sales has been down this year as the result of a high rate of contract cancellations and fewer investors.

NAHB's latest biannual survey on the cost of construction finds that it has cost significantly less to build a new single-family home this year than in 2009 because of declining square footage. While there hasn't been much change in the share of the sales price that goes to construction costs, builder profit dropped to an all-time low of just 6.8% of the final sales price in 2011.

Source: NAHB's Eye on the Economy, December 1, 2011



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## **Business Forms**

**Look to the Association for all your business forms needs. MLA has competitive prices for all stock and custom forms, including business envelopes.**

**Contact De at the MLA office, 1-800-747-6529 for pricing and more information.**

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