

WOOD N YOU LIKE TO KNOW

Elmsdale Lumber Company Limited

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Issue # 293

Notes from the Editor

Ask and you shall receive!

When COVID hit in March, lumber movement came to an abrupt stop. Wholesalers, retailers, treaters, and reload facilities put the brakes on receiving lumber from sawmills. For 2 months, it was uncertain what the demand for lumber would look like. Clearly, Covid isolation forced idle hands to find ways to keep busy and home renovations and improvements became one of the more popular ways to fill time. Within a few months, retailer's shelves and lumber yards were empty.

Although our order file was full, we were left with an uncertainty whether the buyers would be honoring their purchase orders. We continued to produce lumber and sell it on the open market rather than put it in inventory in anticipation the flow of lumber would return to normal. Cash flow is critical to survival of successful business outcomes.

Thanks to the "Do-it-Yourselfers" there was a surge in demand, and it wasn't long before the buyers were very anxious to receive the lumber they ordered. To achieve an on-time delivery we had to put our engines in high gear. We explained our predicament to our team and asked them to consider ways we could expedite the flow of lumber. The sawmill guys continued to tweak things at the sawmill, paying attention to the current purchase order requirements. The planer mill crew worked together to ramp up production, seeking out ways to minimize downtime and turning up planer speeds. The planer mills efforts resulted in a new daily record of 913,000 board feet in a single shift. Unbelievable!

We are very close to meeting our commitments with our customers and looking forward to taking on some new orders at the new sky-rocketing prices.

Until next month, "Show us the money!" Gennie

Notes from the Safety Committee

2020 in Review

Jan	0 lost time	0 medical aid
Feb	0 lost time	0 medical aid
Mar	0 lost time	1 medical aid
Apr	0 lost time	0 medical aid
May	0 lost time	0 medical aid
June	0 lost time	0 medical aid
July	0 lost time	0 medical aid
Aug	0 lost time	0 medical aid

We received our 2019/2020 safety awards and are sorting for distribution to our team members who have been with us for 6 months or more, as per our safety points program guidelines. Well done everyone. Congratulations.

School is about to resume, and March Break is almost officially over. There is much debate about the "Back-to-School" plan during the COVID-19 pandemic and whether to send the kids back to school. Only you can decide what works best for your family. Regardless of where you stand in the debate, we can all encourage our kids to **be safe** and follow Public Health protocols, and always - Be Kind.

We are hopeful we'll be able to hold our annual summer BBQ for our outstanding team. Like many other functions, it will look a little different this year due to COVID-19. We are currently working on the best plan possible to ensure our social distancing requirement is met while allowing us to get together and enjoy a BBQ lunch. We'll keep you posted with the details as we finalize them.

If you see a safety hazard or have a safety concern, please speak with your direct supervisor or safety committee representative.

Until next month, Nick Miller, Darren Isenor, Don Isenor, Craig Isenor, Mark Wilber and Angie Kainola

Notes from the President

I am sure we all have stories about Covid-19 and how it has affected our families and the way we go about our daily activities each day. Downey was advised by his doctor to take extra special caution with self-distancing because of his age. For the last several months, Downey has avoided coming into the office. Most days you can see him making his rounds, checking log and lumber inventories from the safety of his vehicle. He keeps the office staff up to date by telephone on his daily activities. One of his weekly chores is to sign the cheques issued to our log suppliers. The office folks have worked out a very efficient system to accommodate self-distancing. Each Thursday, Downey calls the office from his vehicle to announce his arrival and Amanda or Angie bundle the cheques and deliver the package to him for his approval and signature. The bundle of cheques is usually accompanied by a cup of coffee.

On Thursday, August 13th, Downey celebrated his 89th birthday. When Downey arrived at the office, several of the office staff made their way out to wish Downey a Happy Birthday. Amanda delivered his bundle of cheques and Gennie slid his carrot cake through his passenger side door and we all sang Happy Birthday. At 89 years young and after 73 years of service as an integral part of the ELCO team, Downey is still very much engaged. Thanks Downey and I very much look forward to a piece of next year's cake.

As you all know, in January of this year our government ordered the shutdown of Northern Pulp. This has been a huge hit for the forest industry of Nova Scotia. I wrote an article for the media and I entitled it Premier McNeil's Legacy. On Monday, August 24th, my opinion piece was published in All Nova Scotia. I also sent it to Global News, the Chronicle Herald, and the Pictou Advocate. I thought I might share it with you should the others decide not to print it.

Premier McNeil's Legacy

Since the surprise announcement that Premier McNeil would be stepping down, a lot has been said about the Premier's legacy. As a long-time representative of the Forestry industry in Nova Scotia I thought I should speak to the Premier's legacy on the forestry sector in NS.

Notes from the President, con't

Many are suggesting that the "tough" decisions the Premier made around Boat Harbour and the closure of the Northern Pulp mill are part of his legacy. I don't disagree with that. Boat Harbour is closed and no one is suggesting that we should go back. But the resulting closure of Northern Pulp has left thousands without jobs in rural Nova Scotia and forestry throughout the province is suffering. Can't we find a way to make both the closure of Boat Harbour and the modernization and restart of the Northern Pulp Mill part of the Premier's legacy as well?

I know there has been a lot of talk about Northern Pulp having 5 years to get a new Effluent Treatment Facility (ETF) designed, submitted, and approved by the province. But the truth is Northern Pulp had 15 years left in a contract with the province before they had to build a new ETF. The Boat Harbour legislation, while well intentioned, took 10 years away and left the mill with only 4 years and 8 months to complete the work. A shortened timeline when all factors are considered. Next the provincial Dept. of Environment started the Environmental Assessment process for the new ETF asking the mill to complete 7 studies. Upon completion of those studies the department asked for 2 more studies, then they added 2 more and then they added 6 more for a total of 17. The department continued to move the goal posts asking for more and more work until a whopping 68 studies were completed and time had run out.

The department has been quick to blame the mill for providing incomplete information, but the truth is the department did not have the experience or expertise to know what to ask for or to clearly articulate what was required. They kept changing their minds not because the work wasn't up to snuff, but because they didn't really know what they wanted. Even today the department won't agree to guidelines for a new process or to outline what exactly would be required for the mill to successfully complete an environmental assessment.

Notes from the President, con't

Northern Pulp was promised that the process would be guided by the science. So, let's allow the science to guide us forward. A study commissioned by the Government of Nova Scotia and conducted by Dalhousie's top Environmental Professor Tony Walker looked at whether there were any impacts on the Northumberland Strait from the operation of the Northern Pulp mill for the last 53 years. The report shows no negative impacts from the operation of the mill. For some unexplained reason this study was hidden from the public and local stakeholders during the process. It wasn't alone. Another independent science-based research study conducted by St. FX Ecology professor Jim Williams showed no harmful impacts on the commercial fisheries, or on the receiving ecosystem in the Northumberland Strait from treated pulp effluent.

Finally, since the decision was made to shut down the mill, the forestry sector has been asking to work with the government and the mill to find a way forward. Paper Excellence would like to stay in Nova Scotia and modernize the Northern Pulp mill. The Northern Pulp mill was an integral part of the Nova Scotia forestry sector. Its closure has had an immediate negative impact on the sector and our businesses. Markets for softwood and hardwood pulpwood are practically non-existent. The value of private landowner woodlots has been reduced because the wood on them has less market value. The volume of wood moving around the province has been significantly reduced, negatively impacting the trucking and vehicle servicing sectors. The only product prices that have sustained themselves are produced lumber prices. Northern Pulp, because of its central location, high fiber demand and ability to use low grade pulpwood and high-quality value-added sawmill chips, added value to every part of the forestry sector. Without Northern Pulp, all forestry in Nova Scotia has less value. Much of the sector has become vulnerable and may not survive.

Notes from the President, con't

I believe the closure of Boat Harbour and the associated issues are now rightly being addressed and that is part of the Premier's legacy. But so are the thousands of jobs lost in a sector of the economy that is asking to get back to work. Surely a better legacy for this Premier would be to find a way to restart our industry by welcoming a large new investment in Nova Scotia while ensuring its environmental effects are acceptable as they are throughout Canada where 88 other mills currently operate. Now that would be a legacy that would make us all proud.

Until next month, Robin

Notes from Sales

What goes UP must keep going??? That saying doesn't have the same ring, but it certainly sums up the lumber market in 2020. Record prices have long been surpassed which continues to surprise everyone, regardless of how long they have been in the lumber business. There is a feeling people will put projects on hold at higher than expected prices but the retail sector has yet to experience that.

It should not be a surprise that markets are out of sorts in 2020. Facing abnormal times has become the "norm" this year. If you told me last year that wearing a mask in public would be mandatory, I would have said you are crazy. We are living in unprecedented times and the lumber business is no different.

Stay safe!

Joel

Notes from Woodlands

This last week has provided a dramatic swing in temperatures and a fall feel is in the air. As we are well under way with our Pockwock harvest, the warm dry weather this summer has limited the challenges that can present themselves when working in the watershed. I hope heavy wet weather holds off for a bit longer so we can wrap things up trouble free.

With fall approaching, there is a need to secure an adequate log supply, especially under current circumstances. With that, it seems there is an extra element of planning necessary as the demand for sawable material and harvesting capacity remains high. We are working with harvesting contractors and landowners to organize a harvest plan that will facilitate market opportunities but also meet landowners' expectations and contractor schedules. For everything to work, it takes a team effort on all fronts and we appreciate the willingness from contractors and landowners to work together.

In a few weeks we plan to begin harvesting operations on the Mi'Kmaq Forestry Initiative St. Croix land base. This area encompasses lands from Highway 101 in Ellershouse South towards St. Margarets Bay and totals over 30,000 acres. We began working with the Initiative earlier this spring helping plan operations under direction from the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'Kmaq (CMM) and Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNO) along with the Department of Lands and Forestry. It has been a great experience, and everyone involved has shown a collective enthusiasm towards the project. Starting in a week or two, we will complete necessary road construction and upgrades, followed by commercial thinning and selection harvests towards the end of September. As the planned harvest activities unfold over the next few months, I will keep you posted. This is a great opportunity for ELCO to further broaden our scope of collaborating with stakeholders and I look forward to working with KMKNO and CMM as we see this year's treatments to completion.

Until next month, Jason Casey and the Woodlands Team

Notes from Peter Dillman's Corner

Thinking of You

Just wanted to let Bubba, Janet and the boys know they are in our thoughts and we are thinking of them. If there's anything you need or want, please don't hesitate to ask as we are here for you.

Golf Anyone?

We have some new faces at ELCO this year. If there are any golfers among you who might be interested in partaking in our annual golf tournament, there will be some information with a signup sheet hitting the bulletin boards in the near future so take a second and check it out.

Welcome Aboard

We have a new addition at the planer mill. Brett Lively joined us on Wednesday, August 19. His timing was perfect as we were doing 2 x 8 just before we ran all the 2 x 10 and we followed up with 2 x 12 (LOL). Baptism by fire you might say. He was still standing come Friday, so I would think he could be a keeper as his Granddad happens to be Mel Lively, so we know he comes from good stock.

Employees of the Month

Occasionally, for a variety reasons, we find ourselves short-handed. When this happens, everyone pitches in and gets the job done. Depending upon the vacant position, the ripple effect has a different impact to different folks. This month, Roland Murray stepped into the vacant seat and the extra workload was shared between Liam Noble, Matthew Works and Odessa Jack. Take a bow! You've earned our appreciation for picking up the slack. Sorry to say but that's all you get!

Notes from Stephen Molnar's Corner

I would like to acknowledge Don Isenor and Owen Isenor for all the hard work and craftsmanship they put into upgrading the lunchroom plumbing. I would also like to thank Jon Molnar for installing the cupboards. I am still working on getting a larger bulletin board installed and a few minor repairs. Other than that, our lunchroom is looking pretty darn good. Thanks guys.

As hunting season approaches, I thought you might be interested in reading an article Jon submitted to "Big Game Illustrated Magazine". It was published in the spring of this year. Great job Jonathan, I am sure everyone will enjoy reading this article and appreciate the pictures you sent along.

Until next time, Stephen Molnar



August 50/50

Jason Isenor	Aug 07
Colin Hallahan	Aug 14
Jon Molnar	Aug 21
Greg Grant	Aug 28

Sept Birthdays

Craig Isenor	Sept 23
Justin Isenor	Sept 02
Shawn Preeper	Sept 20
Amanda Hoogendoorn	Sept 03
Corey White	Sept 22
Chris Wilber	Sept 27

August Anniversaries

Trevor Hare	31 years
Liam Noble	1 year

