

WOOD N YOU LIKE TO KNOW

Elmsdale Lumber Company Limited

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Issue # 307

Notes from the Editor

For as long as I can remember, the ELCO team has worked hard at minimizing risk at work. We encourage the reporting of “near misses” to assess and make improvements to minimize the risk. In addition, through articles in the newsletter and chats at group meetings, our Safety Committee regularly reminds us to implement safe practices at home.

Our team has sacrificed personal comfort to make sure we keep safe from Covid. They have practiced social distancing, wearing masks, washing hands, and disinfecting common surfaces. To-date, their efforts have paid off in a big way and we have not had an instance of a Covid infection.

Last year, the Covid restrictions imposed by the government prevented us from having our company Christmas party. This year, after much debate, we have once again decided not to host a company Christmas party. So, similar to last year, we will be passing out a Christmas gift in lieu of the party, along with our traditional ham.

Two of my favourite things are celebrating Christmas with family and friends. For me, I really look forward to our Christmas party. And another enjoyment high on my list is travel. Covid has really impacted my need to travel. To go or not to go? I am double vaccinated and will get in line for a booster shot as soon as I am eligible. My biggest question is what happens if I contract COVID during a trip. Will Canada let my COVID infected body back on home turf?

This is our last newsletter of 2021. So, allow me to be one of the first to wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas!

Until next year, Gennie

Notes from the Safety Committee

The minutes from our last safety meeting are posted on the bulletin boards around the property. Please take a moment to review them and be sure to ask your supervisor or any member of our safety committee about any questions you may have.

Here we are, less than a month before Christmas. Christmas is a season filled with family, food, and holiday “cheer”. Whatever your “Cheer” is, please be safe and don’t drive under the influence. There are lots of options available for a sober drive home. Please play safe.

Just like most companies, we have a safety program here at ELCO that we’re very proud of. We require our employees to have steel-toed footwear and we happily supply them with the rest of their needed PPE to ensure they are working as safely as possible. We have several safety policies here we enforce as well, all geared around keeping our team safe from the inherent risks relating to working near our machinery and equipment. We are sending out a general reminder to all our team members that cell phones are not permitted at your workstations as they create a distraction and quickly become a safety concern. We thank everyone for their cooperation and commitment to our safety program. Let’s continue to keep each other safe.

This is our last newsletter blast of 2021, so from all of us on the Safety Committee, we wish you and your families a wonderful holiday season, and we hope Santa finds you all.

Until next year, Brian Myers, Trevor Hare, Devin Castle, Craig Isenor, Mark Wilber, and Angie Kainola

Notes from the President

For several months, I have been trying to keep everyone updated on our 2 major projects; our new boiler and building, and our sawmill building and equipment project. I will again give you an update and because we do not publish a newsletter in December, your next update will not happen until the end of January 2022. I am sure lots will have happened by then.

Boiler Project Update

The boiler building is almost complete. The roof system has about 4 layers of which only one is in place at the writing of this note. This roof keeps most of the weather out and we are waiting for a couple of dry days to finalize the roof system. The ash removal system collects ash and places it in a bin outside of the boiler building. There will be a small addition to the building to store the ash. The concrete of this addition has been poured and is ready for the walls and a roof. The boiler itself is virtually ready to go. There is a 9-inch-thick layer of refractory in the fire box. This refractory is like a mud, concrete mix that is jack hammered to the sides and ceiling of the fire box and needs to be dried out by a process that takes a minimum of 66 hours. You start with a small fire and get the fire box up to a temperature of 50 degrees Fahrenheit. You hold that temperature for an hour and then increase the temperature to 100 degrees and then 150 degrees and so on until you reach a temperature of 1100 degrees. After the 66 hours, the refractory will be dry. This process took place late last week and ended around noon on Sunday, November 21. When the temperature reached 600 degrees, it became quite a chore to keep the fire box full of firewood. Warren and Rob manned this process with the great help from Devin Castle, Liam Noble and Mark and me. Thanks Devin and Liam for a great job. We really appreciate your help with this 66-hour, non-stop operation.

Notes from the President's Corner, con't

Last month, I mentioned Matthew Blackwell was like a machine with the painting of the yellow and black painting for the catwalks and handrails in the boiler building. Now we have a bit more painting to do, so take notice Matt, we will be soon reaching out for your assistance once again.

The technician from Hurst Boilers in the United States will be arriving the evening of November 29 and plans to start his inspection on November 30 and hopefully, we will be firing up the boiler for the first time shortly thereafter.

Sawmill Project Update

As you heard in the past, there are a huge number of issues that needed to be co-ordinated regarding this project. The new log infeed system needs to be operational before we can complete the concrete foundation work for the sawmill building as the end of the new building goes through the existing log deck. Molnar Welding has been working hard to get the massive amount of welding completed, and just as in the boiler building, we need catwalks in place for the electricians to place wire trays.

The new log infeed main switch gear arrived last Wednesday. The challenge was to get this equipment to the new, second-storey electrical room; mission complete. The pressure is now on Bergman Electric to complete the job on time as we have programmers arriving from TS Manufacturing to get the new log line operational. We fully expect to be running logs through the new system a few weeks before Christmas. The concrete work around the sawmill to accommodate the new building is still ongoing, although this past week the massive amount of rain we received did not help matters.

Notes from the President, con't

Large sections of concrete floor in the basement of the sawmill have been cut out. Kel-Greg removed the slabs with the use of their mini excavator and our Bobcat. There will be footings poured in the sawmill basement to accommodate future equipment.

Metal fabricators, Marid Industries, have a few beams to install in the existing electrical room in the sawmill. These are complicated to get in place, but I am sure they are up to the task. We are hoping sometime before Christmas we will be cutting holes in the roof of the sawmill and lowering columns from the roof to the new concrete footings in the basement of the sawmill. This will make everything ready for the new year when the old log infeed system will disappear, and the remaining concrete will be complete, and the new building will be erected over the existing sawmill.

These are just a few of the issues we have been facing but lots of progress has been made since our last newsletter. By the time of our next newsletter at the end of January 2022, it will be interesting to see how much progress we have made, and I can hardly wait to report this to our readers.

Tours

As you probably know, the team at Eacan Timber market our lumber. Our two companies have a very close relationship, but unfortunately, we don't get together as often as we should. This month, the entire Eacan team arrived with lunch in hand. After lunch and some catching up, Mark and I took them on a tour of the sawmill, new boiler room and the planing mill. It was a great education for a couple of the newer members of their team, and a great update for their entire team on the status of our new projects.

Notes from the President, con't

Our new government, headed by the Honourable Tim Houston, brings new ministers to the plate. Tory Rushton from Cumberland South is the new Minister of the Department of Lands and Forestry. I have known Tory for quite some time, and I am sure he will do a great job. We also have a new Deputy Minister, Karen Gatien. Karen's previous post was Associate Deputy Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Karen fully admits she doesn't know much about forestry but is willing and able to learn and I think this is fantastic. Karen also admitted she never had the experience of touring a sawmill. I told her we needed to fix this, and she came for a tour. Like many others who we have toured through our facility, she made comments like "not many realize what goes into making lumber". She expressed she learned a lot and thanked our ELCO team for our hospitality. We should not expect people in our government departments to properly represent any industry without fully understanding the industry they represent.

Until next month, Robin

Notes from Sales

First, thanks to Robin, Mark, Craig, and the ELCO crew for the mill tour last Thursday. As a salesperson, it is always nice to get into a lumber mill and see, smell, and feel the products I buy and sell daily. Also, to see the enthusiasm and commitment from Elmsdale Lumber to its employees, community, and province for both today and the future is something that should make each of you very proud. As we all spoke about during lunch, the ELCO product is highly sought after in all corners of North America. Some may even say, or perhaps sing, "It's the best damn lumber".

Anyway, my name is Clark Udle, and I came to Eacan in 2014, but have been in the lumber selling business since 2005. After a brief career as a hockey player and a couple of degrees at Saint Mary's University, I was facing the decision of what to do in life.

Notes from Sales, con't

So, I began working for Weyerhaeuser doing mill sales for MacTara and Weyerhaeuser OSB mill (Miramichi). Weyerhaeuser gave me a chance to learn the business, which I still do daily. Looking back to 2005 and my first day on the job, who knew a 2x4 wasn't actually 2x4? My mind was blown, and I continue to look for opportunities to continually learn the business, whether it be the actual size of wood, new customers and mills, or a new boiler system at ELCO.

I started with Eacan after I met with Joel at a Starbucks in Dartmouth early 2014 and I am still here today, now as business partner with Brad, Joel, and Evan. I began focusing on LTL (Less Than Load) out of a reload yard in Truro and customers quickly put a lot of trust in us. We carried the right inventory and had excellent delivery service. Eacan has since moved to a larger reload in Dartmouth, where LTL continues to flourish for the same reasons. However, I have started to shift my attention to larger Canadian customers, and south to the USA, where we see large growth opportunities for myself and Eacan. I am very competitive when it comes to buying and selling and still get a thrill out of selling every full load or issuing a PO to what I feel is a great buy. I never want to lose focus of sales and our retail customers but do truly love buying lumber from mills. Given the right market conditions, I'd have lumber stacked to the moon and back!

I live in the West End of Halifax, and when I am not working, I play gentlemen's hockey, watch my Denver Broncos on Sundays, and Atlantic Salmon fish whenever my wife lets me. Joking aside, I am very happily married to Kate, who hails from Bedford and works for the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia. We were married in St. Lucia in 2007, so will be celebrating our 15th anniversary this coming April 18, hopefully on another Caribbean Island if Covid allows. We have a very smart, kind, and wonderful son named Henry, who is eight years old. "Hank the Tank" is very social, he loves playing with his friends and loves going to Grade 3 at Sir Charles Tupper. He is an avid hockey player (go Halifax Hawks!), baseball player (go Halifax Mets!), and basketball player (go Norwood Knights!)

Notes from Sales, con't

He also loves smallmouth bass fishing with his Poppa and riding his dirt bike, a Honda 110, in Tatamagouche. As a family, we are rounded out by our 11-year-old Portuguese Waterdog, named Alfie. He's a good old boy and has become slow and gone deaf in his old age, but never seems to miss a scrap of food that has fallen off a plate nor a chance to chase a ball.

The lumber market never fails to keep us on our toes, and we currently find ourselves on an upswing in pricing heading into winter. I am a perpetual bull by nature, so I was predicting a small run to finish 2021, but the unfortunate BC flooding has created logistical issues that are affecting supply and perhaps more importantly, started panic buying from customers. It appeared the pipeline was lean before the BC rain and the newly opened PO books quickly scooped up a lot of the available lumber, especially quick shipping lumber. As I write this, cash is up substantially, the CME has gone up over \$100 since the new January period began, and print following up as quickly as it can. USA Thanksgiving will provide a small pause this week, but most mills already have healthy order files, which should allow this market to continue upwards through Christmas.

After that, we will all face 2022 with the lessons learned from these past two years and with low interest rates and high housing starts, I expect great selling ahead.

Have a safe and happy holiday season. Clark Udle



Notes from Woodlands

Normally we expect log deliveries to slow down in November. Instead, with favourable fall weather and strong supplier relationships, we continued to see a good flow of logs throughout November. Having said that, we are starting to see some wet weather, and we do anticipate a slow-down in deliveries over the next month or so. Regardless, our log inventory is currently quite healthy, and we should be able to navigate through reduced flow times appropriately. We are putting a final drive on to finish planned 2021 silviculture activities on ELCO lands and with the hard work from the silviculture workers, we are on track to complete the jobs before years end.

It was another challenging year for silviculture crews as issues related to Covid 19 compounded along with existing worker shortages continue to affect the industry across Nova Scotia. As a provincial review is now taking place for current silviculture systems, it is our hope we can address some of the challenges affecting recruitment and retention of silviculture workers in Nova Scotia. The sustainable management of our forests depends on non-merchantable silviculture treatments and to grow and retain this very important part of the forest industry. We must maintain silviculture systems and programs that provide opportunity for contractors. Although, there are several complex reasons why this sector has struggled with worker retention. I believe we need to start with a plan that will provide reasonable assurance of long-term success for contractors. With a thriving long term, sustainable silviculture work force, the forest industry as a whole can expect a long-term sustainable fiber supply and in turn, a responsible balance of Nova Scotia's forest resource. I am optimistic we can improve, adapt, and thrive through these current workforce challenges.

We have the ability and a network of hard-working individuals who are quite passionate about this subject and are willing to do the work. I look forward to seeing this unfold as we head into 2022 and feel confident we can improve the path forward.

Notes from Woodlands

As this will be our last note for the year, our woodlands team would like to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season and we look forward to reporting back in 2022!

Until next year, Jason and the Woodlands Team

Notes from Peter Dillman's Corner

Sorry Wrong Number

Earlier this month, Nick answered the phone at work. It was a one-sided conversation with Nick saying, "no problem". Nick said it sounded like an old lady and she had the wrong number. That got me to thinking about when I lived in Lantz and received a call around midnight. I got out of bed as the phone was on the dresser. After saying hello and after a second or two, they hung up the phone with out saying a word. The following morning, I took Maggie to work at the airport for 3:00 a.m. When I got back home, I got the phone and hit the redial button from the midnight call. It rang for 5 to 6 times when a guy finally answered, I told him I was returning his earlier call. When I asked what he wanted, he replied he dialed the wrong number. I told him he should have said as much and then I hung up.

So, let that be a lesson to all, just don't hang up in someone's ear because you don't know who might be on the other end.

Harvesting

Logs are not the only thing that gets harvested in the woods by ELCO. As I write this note, there is a couple of weeks to go in the hunting season. I am happy to say we have our fair share of hunters here at ELCO. To the best of my knowledge, at this time, Phillip has got a deer, his kid brother bagged 2. Stephen and Jon bagged two as well. We just don't shoot deer as Trevor can attest. He got himself a bear. Should be lots of meat and stories to go around for everyone. Great job guys.

Notes from Peter Dillman's Corner, con't**Grade Check Time**

For the past 3 years, Charlie Leblanc was our lumber grade inspector for the Maritime Lumber Bureau. Charlie recently accepted another job. In the meantime, we have none other than the head guy himself, Executive Director of the MLB, Kevin Merriam, keeping an eye on us until he recruits someone to replace Charlie. It has been 3 or 4 years since I last saw Kevin. I hardly recognized him. I am thinking the last 3 to 4 years have been hard on him (LOL). He says he feels good and that's all that matters. After a few visits, I am sure I will get used to seeing him with all that gray.

Boo Boo in the Bathroom

We had some toilet issues a while back here at the planer, so some gyprock got torn off the wall to accommodate some new piping. Well, after 6 months or so, it was decided to straighten up the bathroom with Santa coming just around the corner. Boo Boo came over on a couple occasions and mucked it up for us. It turned out as smooth as a baby's bum (LOL). Now it was time to bring in our company painter who we discovered last month, Mr. Blackwell. Once he got going, we couldn't get him stopped. Not sure how many coats were applied. He did the wall, the baseboards, and the door. He painted pretty much everything in the bathroom but the mirror.

Honk Honk

We are wishing Phillip nothing but luck on his upcoming driving test in December. Nothing you can't handle Phil. Here's just a little advice Phil, don't be smoking while the instructor is in the car.

Get Well Soon

Everyone is wishing Devin a speed recovery and looking forward to him getting back at the planer, healthy and happy.

November Anniversaries

Nothing to report

December Anniversary

Brian Myers 22 years

**December Birthdays**

Jason Molnar December 22

January Birthdays

Colin Hallahan January 22

Gennie Himelman January 29

Bret Lively January 27

Brian Myers January 15

**November 50/50**

Nov 5 Devin Castle

Nov 12 Corey White

Nov 19 Rob Himelman

Nov 26 Roland Murray

