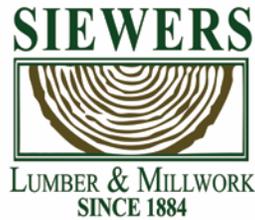


March 19, 2014



“Preserving the Past while Building the Future.”



Celebrating 130 Years of Service

A note from the Siewers Family...

NO SNOW! Think Spring.....

We hope you have been able to survive this winter season thus far. This has been a tough winter with Mother Nature unable to decide when she wants winter to end. We are hopeful that winter is almost over and we are thinking spring here at Siewers Lumber Company!

We have a very exciting spring planned here at Siewers Lumber starting with celebrating our 130th Anniversary. We owe all of you a big thank you for your helping us make this milestone and want to invite you to help us celebrate our Founder's Day on Thursday, May 22nd, 2014. We start with a BBQ lunch from 11:30 – 1:00. Cox Wood Preservers and Simpson Strong-Tie are sponsoring the lunch and will have representatives here showcasing different decking and building products.

Many of you know that we have been supplying products to Stalwart Films. We worked with them on the Lincoln movie and more recently a new TV Series titled: **TURN**, which premieres on April 6th at 9:00 PM on AMC. The reviews on the series have been great! It is the untold story of the first American spy ring, that took place during the Revolutionary War. Tune in and let us know what you think.

We hope you can make it to our Founder's Day Celebration in May! Please call us at 358-2103 or email us at laurenf@siewers.com with a headcount. We hope to see you in May when we celebrate 130 years!

-The Siewers Family

March 19, 2014

Economic News

Prioritize high-interest debt:

All debt is not equal. So while you should always pay your minimum, a more productive strategy is “racking and stacking”. Essentially, you rank your debt in order of highest to lowest interest rates and prioritize paying off the debt with the highest interest rate first by devoting any extra cash toward that debt. Once it’s paid off, you move down the list to pay down the next high interest debt.

For more tips that can save you money, visit “How to bust 12 bad money habits” on the finance section at www.msn.com

U.S. Private Sector Jobs in February: ADP

U.S. private sector added 139,000 jobs in February, shy of economists expectations, and gains in the previous month were revised lower, a report by a paymills processor showed.

The data once again is clouded by harsh winter weather, which has made it hard for economists and investors to measure the strength of the U.S. economy.

According to economists, the report still shows things are improving. Things should look less distorted in March and April. Spring is “make or break” time for the economy.

The complete report can be found at www.msn.com.

Can Listings Be Used to Predict Home Prices?

Selling a home can take months, a big reason why home prices are among the most lagging of economic indicators. Thankfully now there are many web sites and real estate agents that are collecting the price and listing data that economists can use to produce real-time price indicators.

This can potentially help home buyers, real-estate agents and home builders get an earlier read on where prices are going.

Unlike stocks or commodities, real estate can’t be easily traded because each home is a little different. Sales can take months to complete and record and while sellers advertise prices during listing, they have little motivation to publicize the final price. Since prices are for the most part a reflection of the local economy and housing supply, the initial rush of listing information gives a pretty good idea of where prices are headed.

For more information on this story go to the economic section of the Wall Street Journal at www.wsj.com.

Here comes El Nino; good news for US weather by Seth Borenstein, AP Science Writer
Relief may be on the way for weather weary US with the predicted warming of the central Pacific Ocean brewing this year that will likely change weather worldwide.

March 19, 2014

The warming called El Nino, is expected to lead to fewer Atlantic hurricanes, more rain next winter for draught stricken California and southern states, and even a milder winter for the nation's frigid northern tier next year, meteorologists say.

While it could be good news to lessen the southwestern US drought and shrink heating bills next winter in the far north, "Worldwide it can be quite a different story," said North Carolina State University atmosphere sciences professor Ken Kunkel. "Some areas benefit and some don't."

It is predicted to develop by this summer, but that is no guarantee. It is too early to say how strong this El Nino will be.



Focus On: Central Virginia/Richmond February 2014 Housing Market

New Listings	Current Contracts	Sold Vs. List Price	Months of Supply
1,738	1,141	98%	8
Down 15%	Down 9%	No Change	Up 3%
Vs. Year Ago	Vs. Year Ago	Vs. Year Ago	Vs. Year Ago

In February, the average sale price in the Richmond area was 98% on the average list price, which is similar compared to a year ago.

Contractor News

6 Simple Habits That Can Save You Hours by Stephanie Vozza

From shortcuts and life hacks to proven productivity methods, we are all looking to save time and get more done. If you want to be even more successful, it's time to tap into your super powers: your habits.

The following 6 suggestions were found in a Duke University study:

1. Plan your day the night before.
When you check your-to-do list in the morning, you've already wasted time. By planning the night before you will buy back two or three hours a day
2. Log Out
If you're easily tempted by social media or email, make a habit of logging out before you start a project or important task. "Distracted work takes far longer than focused work." Emily Schwartz

March 19, 2014

3. Prepare for meetings.

If you've called the meeting, send an email to the other participants telling them what to expect. If you've been invited, ask how to best prepare. This could also work with your customer meetings by having all your points prepared ahead of time.

4. Follow Up.

Make a habit of writing a confirmation via email. This could be a good time to let the customer know you are available for input and care about their business.

5. Clear off your desk.

When you put everything away at the end of the day, you can jump right into work in the morning.

6. Establish a charging routine.

Dead cell phones can be inconvenient, causing you to waste time searching for an outlet. Get into the habit of recharging your phone and any other necessary electronic each night.



Not sure if you need to form an official business structure for your company now or just wait a bit until business picks up and you are ready to expand?

Below are the top reasons why business owners take the step to incorporate or form an LLC. See if any apply to you.

Reasons to Incorporate

1. Separate Personal from Business

When you're operating your business as a sole proprietorship or partnership, there's no separation between the business and the owner. In this case, the owners are the business. They're responsible for signing any contracts, and taking out any loans or lines of credit on a personal level.

In addition, if there's any kind of issue with the business (i.e. a customer sues or creditors seek action), the owners are personally liable. That means personal assets and savings can be at risk.

One important reason for incorporating a company or forming an LLC is to protect the owners/stockholders against personal liability. These official business structures put a wall between the owner and the business. As long as the company complies with all the necessary corporate formalities, then creditors/court judgments generally cannot reach an owner's personal assets to satisfy the company's liabilities.

March 19, 2014

For this reason, people usually want to incorporate/form an LLC before launching their product or service, since the risk of liability increases once you add in customers, users or clients.

2. Prevent Misunderstandings among Founders/Partners

When a business has more than one founder, there's always a chance of an argument over how equity should be split – no matter how close the owners may be.

Incorporating a company and issuing stock to the founders will prevent misunderstandings among equity splits. Even if you choose to form an LLC and not issue stock, you will still have formal paperwork in place that outlines how ownership is split.

3. Allows You to Issue Stock Options

Many entrepreneurs choose to compensate third parties (i.e. employees, vendors or contractors) by granting stock options or offering the opportunity to purchase equity at a low price. This is particularly attractive at the beginning of a business when cash is tight.

It is possible to put together a pre-incorporation agreement stating that someone will get equity (stock) upon incorporation, but it's a lot simpler to incorporate the company first, and then make these kinds of offers.

4. Allows You to Get Funding and Establish Business Credit

If a third party investor wants to invest in your business, there obviously needs to be some kind of entity set up to accept the investment. Venture capitalists and other investors often prefer to work with corporations, since they allow for different classes of stock.

If you're not looking for VC or angel funding, you still may benefit from a formal business structure. That's because owners in partnerships and sole proprietorships need to sign contracts in their own name. That means you'll need to rely on your personal credit and assets to take out a loan or ask for a line of credit.

But once you form an LLC or corporation, the business itself begins its own credit profile.

5. Gives Your Business More Credibility

You may find your sales grow after forming an LLC or incorporating, as adding an LLC or Inc. after your company name boosts your credibility in the eyes of some customers.

In some industries, a formal business structure is required to win certain contracts. Some larger companies are more comfortable hiring a business, rather than a sole proprietor to do the work.

March 19, 2014

6. Adds a Layer of Privacy

When you incorporate or form an LLC, there's an added layer of privacy. In many cases, the registered agent of your corporation goes on record, and not your home or business address.

7. Offers Potential Tax Benefits

In some cases, corporate tax rates are lower than individual tax rates. Corporations and LLC's often qualify for additional tax benefits and deductions that aren't available to individuals.

Many sole proprietors choose to incorporate as a way to lower what they owe in self-employment (SE) taxes. Of course, specific circumstances vary, and you should consult with a CPA or tax advisor about your own particular tax situation.

Incorporating or forming an LLC is a big step, but offers some key benefits, even for the small, solo or family-owned business. Having an Inc. or LLC after your company name isn't just for big business.

Just keep in mind that once you decide to create a formal business structure, you'll have to keep up with ongoing filing obligations. But it might be one of the smartest steps you take for your business and personal finances.

What can't express what's keeping you from winning that Job?

Pay attention to your body language and the other ways you communicate without even realizing it. Sometimes it is the difference between getting the job or not.

What are you projecting? Was it interest in the client and their home, or a sense of "When can I get out of here?" Was I engaged or was I remote?

Use confidence that you are the best and sincerely that you want to do a good job.

Smile to reduce stress. It is proven that when you smile, you feel less stress even if nothing else about the situation changes. And the added bonus is that when you smile other people feel less stress, too. Go ahead and kill two stresses with one smile.

Quick Contractor Tip

Install a Prehung Exterior Door by Patrick McCombe

Installing an exterior door so it works and looks great is an essential building skill.

First wrap the bottom and sides of the opening with flexible flashing and then check the rough sill for level. Shim it level if needed.

After test fitting the door, apply three beads of window-and-door sealant to the bottom of the opening.

Drive one 2 1/2" screw through the brick mold into the framing near the top hinge.

March 19, 2014

Then, go inside to start shimming the door in the opening. Since the door bottom is sitting on a level sill, make the gap around the door consistent for the whole unit to be plumb. At the top, the gap is wider at the latch side and therefore you should shim behind the bottom hinge. If the gap was wider on the hinge side, shim behind the top hinge. Now the gap is uniform around the door, shim behind all the hinges for final fastening.

Remove one of the short screws in each hinge and replace it with 2 ½” screw. These longer screws connect the jamb to the framing. Score the shims with a knife and snap them on.

With the hinge side securely fastened, close the door and adjust the latch-side gap, with shims above and below the latch. Then, open the door and drive screws through the latch-side shims into the framing.

The final step is to drive 2 ½” screws through the brick mold into the framing. Space them about every 12 to 14” all the way around the door.

How would you like to be published in a future issue of Siewers Newsletter?

Be sure it is a quick tip that can help another contractor and one that is simple to understand (“Even I need to understand it!”) It also must be economical to create. Submit your tips to us at laurenf@siewers.com.

Feel Lucky!

*Be sure and bring your business card next time you visit Siewers. Just drop it into the glass fish bowl on the counter to enter a monthly drawing.
Good Luck!!!*

Congratulations to Sam Marques your March winner!

April 15th Tax Day

***Easter Bunny Is Coming
April 20th***

***French Food Festival
May 3rd***

Ask Lauren, Charlie or Michael for details!

March 19, 2014



Economy Snap Shot.....

	<u>Unemployment Rate – Entire U.S.</u>	<u>Consumer Confidence (Indexed to value of 100 in 1985)</u>	<u>Total Housing Starts/Seasonally Adjusted Annual Rate</u>
Feb. 2014	6.7%	78.1	907,000
Prior Month – January 2014	6.6%	80.7	909,000
Prior Year – Feb. 2013	7.9%	68.0	969,000

	<u>Gallon (\$) Of Gas</u>	<u>Existing Home Sales</u>
February 28, 2014	\$3.46	N/A
Prior Month – Jan. 2014	\$3.28	4,620,000
Prior Year – February 2013	\$3.77	4,940,000

Market Summary

	<u>March 19, 2014</u>	<u>1/01/14</u>	<u>3/01/13</u>
DOW	16,353	16,576	14,054
NASDAQ	4,312	4,176	3,160
S&P 500	1,870	1,848	1,514

March 19, 2014

Company Mission

To serve the needs of contractors and do-it-yourselfers.



“The taxpayer – that’s someone who works for the federal government but doesn’t have to take the civil service examination.” Ronald Reagan

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laurenf@siewers.com and we will add them to our
distribution list.***

....Next issue April 17th