

Hometown Service...Hometown Pride!

Thoughts from the President



Bill Wallace

Happy New Year to all. I am hopeful everyone had a great holiday season as we were blessed with some great weather for a change. So great in fact I played golf in Michigan on December 23rd, and I haven't been able to say that before. However, as I pen this, we have just gotten hit with our first real batch of cold winter weather and hope everyone is taking the necessary precautions.

The first thing I want to do is to congratulate all the 2023 employees of the year which are identified in this issue. While always a difficult selection, those recognized for their efforts are truly worthy of the award. We will officially celebrate their accomplishments in a dinner later this spring.

While nothing like the previous two years, 2023 ended up being a much better year than originally anticipated. We started with many predicting a down year and some even calling for a recession, which I am thankful didn't materialize. Most of the customers I have spoken with in the past several weeks have a decent backlog of business and are busy at least for the first half of the upcoming year, and some are booked all of 2024. As the interest rates settle into whatever the new norm may be for the foreseeable future, those home buyers who have been sitting on the sidelines will decide to get into the market. Because most are enjoying a 3% interest rate, there are very few existing houses available

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Retirement of Laurie Mills

After 36 years, President Bill Wallace has announced the retirement of Laurie Mills. Since 1988, Laurie has held several positions including Inside Sales, Accounts Payable Manager, and her position now as Director of Continuous Improvement. In those positions, she contributed to many changes at Big C Lumber. In remembering her previous accomplishments, she said "I'm especially proud to have been involved with the upgrade of our computer system. This was a daunting task, and it left some scars, but Big C is better for it. The change to new software opened tons of opportunities for us to use technology in our business."

While that may have been a daunting task, the welcoming nature of learning is what makes these projects blend perfectly together. Reflecting on advice she would give herself when she joined Big C, she says "...one bit of advice I always share is to have an open attitude towards learning. Even if you don't know something, you can find out. Accept the help and experience of your team members and learn from them." This of course would not be possible without a deep culture that spans over 100 years. "Working every day with people who care about treating people right is a very special part of working here." Laurie said.

As for what she is most looking forward to in retirement, she says "Spending as much time as I can with my wonderful family. I have a fantastic husband of 38 years, two married children who continue to amaze me, and a honey of a granddaughter! We love to hike and camp, so with more time to play we will be doing plenty of that!"



Laurie Mills

Randy Huff appointed Director of Safety

Randy Huff, who works at our Structural Building Components Facility, has recently been appointed Director of Safety by President Bill Wallace. With the increased growth of Big C Lumber, a new position was created to emphasize our focus on the different training and support needed to ensure safety across the company. "As a member of the safety committee," Randy says, "my commitment to Big C's safety stems from a genuine concern for the well-being of our employees. In my role as a director, my primary goal is to foster a safety culture that is ingrained in every aspect of our organization." In recent years, Big C Lumber has made investments in its safety by utilizing new technology such as cameras in all delivery trucks to better analyze driver interactions. Randy has been with Big C Lumber since April of 2016 when he started as a driver. He has since served as Quality Assurance representative at our SBC facility. Congratulations Randy - and best wishes in your new role!



Randy Huff



We'd like to welcome the following new associates to the Big C Lumber family:

COLOMA: Thomas Otte (Yard/Delivery Assistant), Adam Trapp (CDL Driver)
WINDOW & DOOR: McCade Reese (Window Installer)
SCHOOLCRAFT: Willie Ford (CDL Driver)
DELTON: Daniel Newburg (Inside Sales)
STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS FACILITY: Brandon Eichel (Roof Builder), Emily Luthringer (Office Assistant), Grisel Roman (Office Assistant)

We're glad to have you all with us!

THREE OAKS



Jordan Wojdula handing raffle tickets

shirts were handed out to our loyal customers.

The spirit of appreciation was alive at the Three Oaks luncheon on December 15th. Over 300 people were in attendance, and many door prizes ranging from power tools to Big C



Customers enjoying their meals in our showroom

THREE OAKS

We would like to congratulate Courtney Kaptur for her recent promotion to Assistant Manager of our Three Oaks location. She has been with Big C for over 6-1/2 years, and has frequently been at the top of cabinet sales team earning the President's Club honor several times. We wish you luck in your new role!



Courtney Kaptur

EAU CLAIRE



Ken Branham

to any location in need of it. This experience makes him the perfect candidate for this role, and we are proud of his commitment to Big C!

Ken Branham has been promoted to Operations Manager by Scott Foley, Western VP of Operations. For almost 20 years, Ken has been willing to lend a helping hand

LAPORTE

Our Laporte yard was also in the giving spirit with their customer appreciation day. On December 8th, over 90 customers attended, enjoying free lunch and door prizes.



Manager Nick Hamill laughing with a customer

KENDALLVILLE

Tis the season in Noble County! Employees and their family members joined together in celebrating the Christmas season with a few of our delivery trucks being showcased with decorations including a wooden Christmas tree made by our truss plant.



Left to Right: Jason Wehri, Everett Wehri, Payton Wehri, John Wagner, Dawn Ihrle & Chad Ihrle



Big C vehicles joining in on the festivities



Birthdays

Best wishes to the following people who will celebrate birthdays in February & March!

ROSELAND

Derrick Meadows
Sue Sukolics

March 5th
March 29th

ELKHART

Brian Voorde
Dewayne Gangwer
Eric Freedline

February 14th
February 18th
March 23rd

THREE OAKS

John DeMorrow

March 2nd

COLOMA

Dakota Huff
Michael Riggenbach

February 17th
March 5th

MISHAWAKA

Chris Rice
Nick Danley
Jeff Morris
Mike Senesac Jr.

February 5th
February 24th
March 12th
March 25th

ADRIAN

Josh Edinger
Randy Stewart

February 6th
March 2nd

EAU CLAIRE

David Rodriguez

February 18th

GRANGER

Lisa Laskowski
Mark Remus
Ron Felix
Mark Manuszak
Cyle Milewski

February 5th
February 14th
February 25th
March 2nd
March 29th

CROMWELL

Travis Bradley
Rob Springer

February 7th
March 16th

LAPORTE

Debbie Smith

March 7th

MISHAWAKA WINDOW & DOOR

Amanda Abeyta
Gaie Lynne Leer
Ron Goetz
Dave Long

February 23rd
February 24th
March 16th
March 25th

SHIPSHEWANA

Steve Vail
Ryan Owen

March 29th
March 31st

SCHOOLCRAFT

Doug Hunt
Chris Maze

February 14th
March 30th

FORT WAYNE

Drew Brown
Todd Bills
Greg Schmidtke
John Roy

March 7th
March 17th
March 21st
March 26th

KENDALLVILLE

Dominic Stedman

February 23rd

EDGERTON

Matt Franz
Cory Rademacher

February 15th
March 16th

Birthdays

DOWAGIAC STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS

Roy Clark
Jake Roy

February 4th
February 6th

Domnic Nolen
Ben Townsend
Lucas Sanders

February 23rd
March 1st
March 10th

GRANGER CORPORATE

Randy Huff
Rob Sherman
Daniel Bradtmueller
Alec Evans
Joe Brough

February 1st
February 16th
February 16th
March 6th
March 12th

Kevin Zygmunt

March 28th

Anniversaries

Congratulations to all who will be marking their anniversaries with Big C Lumber in February & March. Those with at least five years of service are recognized.

ELKHART

March 10th

Brett Griggs

10 Years

THREE OAKS

March 17th

Ted Zebell

34 Years

COLOMA

February 1st

Melissa Lara

12 Years

March 7th

Gregg Pudell

13 Years

February 25th

Tony Vales

22 Years

EAU CLAIRE

February 11th

Ken Branham

20 Years

February 25th

Chuck Huscher

11 Years

GRANGER

February 29th

Brice Voorde

8 Years

CROMWELL

February 9th

Frank Parker IV

9 Years

LAPORTE

February 26th

Wendy Church

29 Years

February 26th

Eric DeLetter

29 Years

February 26th

Bob Lizak

29 Years

March 21st

Debbie Smith

24 Years

MISHAWAKA WINDOW & DOOR

February 3rd

Jeff Bultinck

31 Years

March 8th

Gaie Lynne Leer

24 Years

March 1st

Shane Lane

5 Years

SHIPSHEWANA

March 23rd

Steve Vail

32 Years

February 25th

Jade Bashore

11 Years

SCHOOLCRAFT

March 13th

Mike Wright

24 Years

FORT WAYNE

February 12th

Jeff Sims

15 Years

February 16th

Jason Allen

9 Years

February 20th

Jason Hamrick

11 Years

March 26th

Mark Bradtmueller

14 Years

March 29th

Darrin Radke

14 Years

KENDALLVILLE

February 12th

Jason Wehri

12 Years

Thoughts from the President (cont.)

and is predicted that the void will have to come from new construction.

The question is when will all this happen. Many economists are predicting 2024 will be on par with 2023 and start to gain steam after the election towards the end of the year. Of course, no one really knows, only time will tell.

Finally, as promised in celebration of the 20th anniversary of our Value Statement I am planning on highlighting two of our 12 values in each of the next six issues of the Big Scene.

Here are the first two of the year:

1. Integrity: People should trust that we will do what we say we will do, and we'll do the right thing.
2. Urgency: We will maintain a high sense of urgency in dealing with customers.

Until next time, stay warm....

Anniversaries

EDGERTON

February 12th	Kim Binder	12 Years
February 18th	Al Wonderly	12 Years

DOWAGIAC STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS

March 11th	Max Howe	5 Years
March 30th	Matt Kurzhal	9 Years
February 15th	Delmur Phillips	8 Years

GRANGER CORPORATE

February 17th	Lon Wenger	32 Years
February 26th	Chuck Goethals	29 Years
February 18th	Cathy Dudeck	11 Years
March 3rd	Bill Kuminecz	37 Years
March 18th	Eric DeCraene	28 Years
March 9th	Joe Brough	32 Years

FORT WAYNE MILL

February 6th	Lou Dornseif	15 Years
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2024 William & Gladys Foley Scholarship Awards

The deadline for our annual scholarship awards is February 15th for the children of full-time Big C Lumber employees. The application can be completed online at: www.cfsjc.org/scholarshipapp. Once you've created an online account, enter the access code **bigc2024** to begin the application. For 2024, the scholarships will be \$4,000 per year and renewable for four consecutive years. We expect to award eight scholarships this year. Good luck to our students!

Granger Christmas Party at Tippecanoe Place

A mystery was afoot on December 9th! All Big C Lumber locations hold their own Christmas parties to celebrate & reflect on the year, but our corporate & Granger locations decided to switch things up a bit with a murder mystery party. Twenty of those in attendance participated in playing the roles of the mystery plot set in the year 1921 (same as our company founding, what a coincidence!).

It was held at Tippecanoe Place in South Bend. Tippecanoe was built by Clem Studebaker, one of the founders of Studebaker Corporation, in 1889.



Bill Wallace (President & CEO) playing the role of cigar-chomping bad guy Al Capone stands behind Bridget & Nick Brady (Betty & Jimmy O'Riley)



Sarah Magor as Cheri Tart & Brandon Magor as Jonas O'Neil looking absolutely dapper!



Our Granger yard after a recent snowstorm

INDIANA

CROMWELL • ELKHART • FORT WAYNE • GRANGER
LAPORTE • MISHAWAKA • ROSELAND •
SHIPSHEWANA • KENDALLVILLE

MICHIGAN

ADRIAN • COLOMA • EAU CLAIRE
SCHOOLCRAFT • THREE OAKS • DELTON

OHIO

EDGERTON

MANUFACTURING

CUSTOM MILLWORK & CABINET FACILITY
WINDOW & DOOR FACILITY
STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS FACILITY

NEXT ISSUE IS SCHEDULED FOR

March 31st,
2024

The Big Scene is a bi-monthly publication.
Contact Alec Evans at the corporate
office with comments or news stories.

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BigCLumber.com

Marshall Holycross Award - Shawn Williamson

Shawn Williamson first joined Big C over 20 years ago when he became an inside sales representative at Coloma. Since then, he has held several positions that have ultimately led him to his current role as General Manager of Eau Claire. Much of this success is a credit to Shawn, but no one makes these grand strides alone. "My journey has absolutely been a team effort in the development of my career at Big C Lumber. I have had great leadership since my inception." With great leadership births deep culture, and this word speaks to the core of who Shawn is. "I am a huge proponent of culture, compassion, and growth. That alone I feel is strongly represented throughout Big C Lumber."

While the Marshall Holycross award is Shawn's highest professional achievement, his personal greatest are the ones less published. "We created a career development program that over the years has developed talented employees into future leaders. I was able to enter and participate successfully, and eventually lead individuals through the program....Often, I feel that I am learning as much as they are. To be able to help build others, would be my greatest achievement."



Shawn Williamson



Marshall Holycross

Marshall Holycross was an operations employee who joined Big C Lumber in 1968 and worked until health issues forced his retirement in 1996. During his 28 years at Big C Lumber, his devotion to the company and his fellow employees was an example for all of us.

Marshall had a great work ethic and a strong sense of urgency for anything related to customer service. He was the first one to show up in the morning and often volunteered to take the day's last delivery. When booming business and limited space required that we build loads overnight, Marshall volunteered for the job. He would often take several deliveries out before going home to sleep. Marshall never complained. He would say "it's got to get done" and proceed to do it. In the early eighties when housing was in a depression and the company was struggling, Marshall told Roger Foley that he would work for free if necessary. If there is such a thing as the perfect employee, it was Marshall Holycross.

2023 Employee of the Year Recipients

Bill Wallace, president & CEO, recently announced the 2023 Employee of the Year winners. Our winners are:

Manager - Adam Freyenberger - SBCF
Operations Manager - Josh Edinger - Adrian
Outside Sales - Kevin Mertz - Cromwell
Inside Sales - Tom Klutts - Schoolcraft
Driver - DJ Kilarney - SBCF
Yard Person - Nate Shriver - Three Oaks
Estimator - Bridget Patzer - Granger
Production - Yasmin Escamiroso & Jeannette Bergman - SBCF
Office - Mike Jurgensen - Corporate Office

In addition to these awards, we would like to congratulate Neil Ackerson, Window & Door Service Technician, for winning our drawing of this years "Above C Level" nominees. Neil and Tiffiney will be joining us on our contractor trip to Riviera Maya.

2023 Safety Awards

In 2023 we embarked on the 22nd year of our Safety Incentive Program which recognizes our operational employees who work the entire 12 months without injury, a safety or DOT violation, or an at-fault accident. The third proclamation of our Value Statement reads “We will do our work safely. The safety of our employees, customers, and the public will always supersede the need for expedience.” We’d like to recognize and thank the following associates for achieving this important milestone.

ROSELAND

Scott Bunkelman
Justin Chapman
Kevin DeMaegd
Michael Kieffer
Eric Martin
Nolan Smith
Ashley Smittendorf
Michael Swartz
James Toth Jr

ELKHART

Dewayne Gangwer
William Mounts
Payton Voorde
Justin Windmiller

THREE OAKS

Scott Habel
Robert Lozmack
Nathan Shriver
Glen Togtman

COLOMA

Bruce Hilliard
Dakota Huff
Kaden Jonjevic

MISHAWAKA

Nicholas Danley
Jeffery Morris
Charles Williams
Sean Wood

ADRIAN

Richard Keene
Refugio Tovar
Manuel Valdez Jr.

EAU CLAIRE

Joseph Palmisano
David Tivolacci
Hunter Williamson

GRANGER

Brayden Baumann
Ron Felix
Michael Kerr
Mark Manuszak

CROMWELL

Travis Bradley
Frank Parker IV
Philip Wiler

LAPORTE

Eric DeLetter

Noah Novitzke
Randall Radloff
Collin Stroobandt
Matthew Wrobel

MISHAWAKA WINDOW & DOOR

Neil Ackerson
Terrance Findley
Alan Guerra
Michael Lane
Javon Lenoir
David Long
Heath Rhodes
James Taylor
Eric Vargo
Brian Yost

SHIPSHEWANA

Stephen Christian
Hunter Dolson
Amos Lambright

SCHOOLCRAFT

Douglas Hunt
Nicolas Kronewetter
Chris Perez
David VanOss

FORT WAYNE

Jason Allen
Todd Bills
Jason Hamrick
Andrew Hart
Darrin Radke
David Rayner
Gregor Schmidtke

DELTON

David Bilek
Joshua Johnson
Lonnie Leonard
Kelly Parker
James Reed
Brett Seagle

KENDALLVILLE

Ken Helf
Dominic Stedman
Jace Wade

EDGERTON

Greg Bell
Scott Brink
Mitchell Gonzales
Kristin Smith

Albert Wonderly

DOWAGIAC STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS

Steven Bakeman
Jeannette Bergman
Michael Berry
Darnesha Bradshaw
Jonah Brethauer
Andres Brito
Roy Clark
Christopher Conn
Timothy Craig
Michael Dorman
Yasmin Escamiroso Nanco

Blaine Evans
Maxwel Howe

Isaiah Jones
Dale Killarney Jr
Logan Luthringer
Mark Martin

Gilberto Meza
John Morales II
Derrick Newby

Dominic Nolen
Hunter Owens
Delmur Phillips
Joseph Rafacz III

Lucas Sanders
Benjermin Townsend
Ashley Vandenburg

Justin Vandenburg
Kevin Vandenburg
Braqsten Whitaker
Emily Whitaker

Lukas Whitaker
Brandon Younger
Bryan Younger

GRANGER CORPORATE

Joe Brough
Clifford Williamson

FORT WAYNE MILL

Nathan Bradtmueller
Daniel Bradtmueller
Louis Dornseif
Christopher Huffman
Steven Strole
Issac Thompson
Jared Wolfe