

Hometown Service ... Hometown Pride!

Thoughts From the President



Bill Wallace

Happy New Year to all!

2024 proved to be a challenging yet rewarding year for Big C Lumber. Our sales ended within 1% of 2023 and if you would have offered that

up in January of last year, I would have said “sign me up”! Interest rates were at a five year high, election jitters, and unrest around the world had many sitting on the sidelines awaiting things to settle down. That said, with the lack of existing inventory, many of our builder partners still had a respectable year.

February 24th will mark the 30th anniversary of the acquisition of Wilson Lumber in Laporte. Many of those employees went on to retire from Big C Lumber and we still have four remaining today. Congratulations to Chuck Goethals, Eric Deletter, Wendy Church, and Bob Lisak on their upcoming 30th anniversary with Big C Lumber. That is in addition to the years they spent at Wilson prior, quite an accomplishment!

In this issue we will be announcing our 2024 Employees of the Year and will formally celebrate them at a dinner in their honor later this spring. While all were nominated by their peers, the final selection is based on many areas, including the comments on the survey we sent out. There are always so many deserving people for each position that it is extremely hard to select just one. I have great admiration for those selected each year and 2024 is no exception. The dedication and hard work that these team members put in is remarkable and all are well

Continued on back page →

New Website

We are kicking off 2025 with a new digital look. As some of you may have seen, the appearance of our main website (www.bigclumber.com) was refreshed. This was an ongoing process over the course of the last eight months, and we are excited to finally present it to you all. The implemented layout improves site browsing experience, and detailed product information helps educate customers accurately. In addition, the Big C story is expanded and a detailed description of our Value Statement gives context for why we do what we do.

Our first website was in 1999 and has since gone through several design iterations. In the past we’ve used a 3rd party to assist in its creation, but the new site was created in house with help from our IT department. The new platform it was created with ensures timely updates and offers the capability to implement features that were not previously possible.



Our new website homepage



Homepage from 2001 website

Career Development Program

On January 22nd, the Career Development team held their first in person meeting this year. A total of 11 members are enrolled in the program, with five new members joining (Kevin DeMaegd, Gilberto Meza, Peyton Nierzwicki, Forrest Loihle, and Kade Stone). The group is led by four new mentors (Alan Skryzpiec, Garrett Baumann, Nick Hamill, and Jade Bashore).

The program was created to help train people for positions that were soon to be vacant due to retirements. Since 2009, dozens of employees have gone through this program to help expose them to different areas of the company in order to guide them towards a rewarding career. During the meeting, the mentors focused on the importance of our Value Statement and created the syllabus around it.

We wish for all the current members to have a wonderful experience in the 2025 Career Development program!



Pictured: James Taylor, Kevin DeMaegd, Gilberto Meza, Emily Feirick, Alan Skryzpiec, Nick Hamill, Forrest Loihle, Garrett Baumann, Jade Bashore, Jason Strowzewski, Peyton Nierzwicki, and Jennifer Baker (Not pictured: Courtney Kaptur, Mike Kerr and Kade Stone)



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

ADRIAN - Christopher Wall Jr. (Inside Sales) **EAU CLAIRE** - Ben Bishop (CDL Driver), Chris Everett (CDL Driver) **GRANGER** - Nick Kaiser (Outside Sales) **MISHAWAKA WINDOW & DOOR** - Gordan Wendland (Installer) **DOWAGIAC STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS** - Caleb Luthringer (Production)

We're glad to have you with us!

ROSELAND



James Taylor

James Taylor has recently accepted a promotion to Installed Sales Coordinator at Roseland. His time at Big C was entirely based at our door shop in Mishawaka, and his knowledge

from that facility will contribute greatly in terms of customer experience and sales. Good luck in your new role James!

THREE OAKS

In the spirit of appreciation, our Three Oaks location held a Christmas luncheon on December 6th. With a couple hundred guests in attendance, everyone enjoyed a catered lunch and participated in prize giveaways.



Customers enjoy lunch in main storefront of Three Oaks

GRANGER

We are happy to welcome Nick Kaiser to the Big C team. Nick's industry experience comprises of 6 years at Hilde working on commercial and industrial accounts. Before that he worked for Trim A Door and Pella Windows & Doors. He will be working as an outside sales representative at Granger, and is excited to learn more about our business and start meeting with customers. Welcome to the Big C Lumber family, Nick!



Nick Kaiser

LAPORTE

Laporte held a holiday luncheon on December 13th. A catered Polish style lunch was served and the main giveaway being a custom designed T-Shirt with our logo wrapped in Christmas lights (Three Oaks also offered this shirt). We appreciate everyone who came to join the festivities!



Festive Big C Lumber shirt

DELTON



Pictured: Stephanie & Bob Brown, and Bill Wallace

Bob Brown, after 40 years of service in our industry, has announced his retirement. The party was held on December 19th with his family, coworkers and customers in attendance. Bob joined the Big C family through our Delton acquisition in 2021, and was a crucial part of these two businesses integrating together. He may still choose to do some part time work for Big C in his retirement, but will

mostly spend his time enjoying hunting outdoors, mowing his lawn, and traveling. He will be missed by his co-workers and Big C as a whole.

KENDALLVILLE

Our Kendallville crew spent time spreading the Christmas spirit at the annual Kendallville Christmas Parade. Their trucks were festively decorated with wreaths, antlers, Rudolph's red nose, and carried an inflatable Christmas tree. From all of us at Big C Lumber, we hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday season.



Big C flat bed truck transporting inflatable Christmas tree

GRANGER CORPORATE

Each year, Big C assembles baskets full of essential goods for the Red Ribbon program. Ten of these baskets were made with goods donated by our employees. This program was created by the Salvation Army to offer businesses and individuals the ability to contribute to families in need.



Pictured: Bill Wallace, Lisa Laskowski, Jennifer Szucs, Alec Evans, Chuck Goethals, Chris Roelandts, Bill Kuminecz, Bridget Patzer and Holly Oshinski

Birthdays

Best wishes to the following people who will celebrate birthdays in February and March.

ELKHART

Brian Voorde February 14
Dewayne Gangwer February 18
Eric Freedline March 23

THREE OAKS

John Demorrow March 2
Michael Riggenbach March 5

COLOMA

Dakota Huff February 17
David Rodriguez February 18

MISHAWAKA

Chris Rice February 5
Nick Danley February 24
Jeff Morris March 12
Mike Senesac Jr. March 25

ADRIAN

Josh Edinger February 6
Randy Stewart March 2

GRANGER

Lisa Laskowski February 5
Mark Remus February 14
Ron Felix February 25
Mark Manuszak March 2
Kevin Cullen March 13
Cyle Milewski March 29

CROMWELL

Travis Bradley February 7
Rob Springer March 16

LAPORTE

Debbie Smith March 7
Austin Morford March 22

MISHAWAKA WINDOW & DOOR

Gordan Wendland February 10
Austin Clark February 10
Amanda Abeyta February 23
Bryin Wesley February 23
Gaie Lynne Leer February 24
Ron Goetz March 16
Dave Long March 25
Mason Lehman March 31

SHIPSHEWANA

Steve Vail March 29
Ryan Owen March 31

SCHOOLCRAFT

Doug Hunt February 14
Kirsten Smith March 5
Chris Maze March 30

FORT WAYNE

Bryan Bechstein March 16
Todd Bills March 17
Greg Schmidtke March 21
John Roy March 26

KENDALLVILLE

Jerry Merriam February 25

EDGERTON

Matt Franz February 15

Birthdays

DOWAGIAC STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS

Jake Roy February 6
Max Weaver February 20
Greg Pitchford February 23
Ben Townsend March 1
Lucas Sanders March 10

GRANGER CORPORATE

Randy Huff February 1
Rob Sherman February 16
Alec Evans March 6
Joe Brough March 12
Kevin Zygmunt March 28

FORT WAYNE MILL

Daniel Bradtmueller February 16
Brian Bair March 4

Anniversaries

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

THREE OAKS

February 7	Scott Habel	23 Years
March 16	Julie Fournier	7 Years
March 17	Ted Zebell	35 Years

COLOMA

February 1	Melissa Lara	13 Years
February 25	Tony Vales	23 Years

EAU CLAIRE

February 11	Ken Branham	21 Years
February 23	Chuck Huscher	12 Years

GRANGER

February 29	Brice Voorde	9 Years
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CROMWELL

February 9	Frank Parker IV	10 Years
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LAPORTE

February 26	Wendy Church	30 Years
February 26	Eric Deletter	30 Years
February 26	Bob Lizak	30 Years
March 21	Debbie Smith	25 Years

MISHAWAKA WINDOW & DOOR

February 3	Jeff Bultinck	32 Years
March 1	Shane Lane	6 Years
March 8	Gaie Lynne Leer	25 Years

SHIPSHEWANA

February 25	Jade Bashore	12 Years
March 4	Alan Skrzypiec	12 Years
March 23	Steve Vail	33 Years

SCHOOLCRAFT

March 13	Mike Wright	25 Years
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FORT WAYNE

February 12	Jeff Sims	18 Years
February 16	Jason Allen	10 Years
February 20	Jason Hamrick	12 Years
March 26	Mark Bradtmueller	15 Years
March 29	Darrin Radke	15 Years

Continued on back page →

Thoughts from the President (cont.)

deserved of this award.

Also, in this issue we recognize all the Operations Employees and their managers who went all 12 months in 2024 without an incident, accident, or injury. To do what we do every day and accomplish that goal is a fantastic achievement and I want to congratulate every one of you who did. This was our first year with a cash award for those without incidents, and while it improved our safety figures, it was not to the level we had hoped. I am praying that 2025 will be a better year in our quest for zero incidents.

Until next time~

Anniversaries

EDGERTON

February 18 Kim Binder 13 Years

February 18 Al Wonderly 13 Years

DOWAGIAC STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS

February 15 Delmur Phillips 9 Years

March 11 Max Howe 6 Years

March 30 Matt Kurzhal 10 Years

GRANGER CORPORATE

February 17 Lon Wenger 33 Years

February 18 Cathy Dudeck 12 Years

February 22 Eric DeCraene 19 Years

February 24 Jayne Moyer 10 Years

February 26 Chuck Goethals 30 Years

March 3 Bill Kuminecz 38 Years

March 9 Joe Brough 33 Years

FORT WAYNE MILL

February 6 Lou Dornseif 18 Years

Brooks William Stone

Congratulations to Caitlin & Blake Stone on the birth of their son, Brooks William. Brooks entered this world on December 14th, and him as well as the Stone family are doing well. Brooks is the first of the sixth generation family-owned Big C Lumber.



Brooks William Stone

Caught in the Act

In this issue, we would like to showcase Brandon Magor's submission for Chris Cook. "This past weekend around 7:30 Saturday morning the help desk started receiving messages from salespeople stating they were unable to invoice any cash orders. Before I could even turn on my VPN Chris Cook was logged in and troubleshooting from his campsite at Tater Creek. Thankfully, Chris seemed to know right where to look and was able to get everyone back up and running in no time. Since resolving the issue, Chris has consulted Epicor and found the information we need to ensure this doesn't happen again. This is one of many great examples where Chris demonstrates a deep understanding of the Big C Lumber values by going above and beyond to ensure we are able to do continue doing business as efficiently as possible." Great job Chris for upholding the values of Big C Lumber!



Chris Cook

2025 William & Gladys Foley Scholarship

Each year, we provide college scholarships to the children of Big C employees to help fund their learning and set them up for success in their careers. We are proud to announce two things: we are increasing the scholarship amount from \$4,000 to \$6,000 per year, up to four consecutive years to account for rising costs in education, and we will also offer scholarships of \$3,000 per year for two year degrees including community college and qualified tech schools. To submit an application, go to www.cfsjc.org/scholarshipapp to create an account and navigate to the apply page. The deadline to apply is February 15th. Similar to last year, we expect to award up to eight scholarships in 2025.



Plaque of former scholarship recipients



Big C truck plowing snow in yard

INDIANA

CROMWELL • ELKHART • FORT WAYNE • GRANGER
LAPORTE • MISHAWAKA • ROSELAND •
SHIPSHAWANA • 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,
2025**

The Big Scene is a bi-monthly publication.
Submit stories to news@bigclumber.com or contact Alec Evans at the corporate office.

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Marshall Holycross Award - Jennifer Baker

Jennifer Baker (Inside Sales) started at the Kendallville location in 1996 when it was formally Broadview Lumber. "I worked there for eight years prior to Big C acquiring the business in 2004. I was doing a lot of the same things as I do now; counter sales, ordered hardware and anything else that needed to be done." In addition to Kendallville, Broadview Lumber consisted of our Fort Wayne store as well as the now closed Auburn location. "I was always a number and nothing mattered but the bottom line. The bottom line has to be important, but Big C goes beyond the numbers and makes the individual feel important from the Corporate team on down. It's the camaraderie and general caring." Even after 29 years in this industry, she still has the drive to please customers on a daily basis. "I am a people pleaser (usually!), so being able to help locate what they need for a project is rewarding to me. It drives me to help the next person who walks through the door." The two most important pieces of advice she has to give is this: "Enjoy your job/responsibilities. What you put into it is what you get out of it. Also, learn about the products. The more I can learn, the better I can do my job."



Jennifer Baker



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. He 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. If there is such a thing as the perfect employee, it was Marshall Holycross.

2024 Employee of the Year Awards

Bill Wallace, President & CEO, announced the 2024 Employee of the Year winners.

Our winners are:

Manager

Jade Bashore - Shipshewana

Operations Manager

Alan Skryzpiec - Shipshewana

Outside Sales

Eric Freedline - Elkhart

Inside Sales

Dave Noffsinger - Adrian

Driver

Jason Hamrick - Fort Wayne

Yard Man

Todd Bills - Fort Wayne

Production

Neil Ackerson - Mishawaka
Window & Door

Estimating

Matt Kurzhal - Dowagiac
Structural
Building Components

Office

Christy Ciula - Mishawaka
Window & Door

Above C Level

Frank Parker - Cromwell

2024 Safety Awards

In 2024, we embarked on the 23rd year of our Safety Incentive Program which recognizes our operations 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

Chris Baker
Scott Bunkelman
Justin Chapman
John Chapman
Kevin DeMaegd
Doug Kapica
Mike Kieffer
Ashley Smittendorf
Mike Swartz

ELKHART

Brett Griggs
Will Mounts
Brian Voorde
Payton Voorde

THREE OAKS

John DeMorrow
Orion Evans
Scott Habel
Courtney Kaptur
Chris Nemitz
Tim Shott
Ted Zebell

COLOMA

Jason Ferrier

MISHAWAKA

Nick Danley
Brandon Snider
Jake Stahl

ADRIAN

Josh Edinger
Manuel Valdez Jr.
Aaron Stewart
Refugio Tovar

EAU CLAIRE

Ken Branham
Joe Palmisano
Shawn Williamson

GRANGER

Brayden Baumann
Mike Kerr

CROMWELL

Travis Bradley

Frank Parker

Tim Sheets
Rob Springer
Philip Wiler

LAPORTE

Eric DeLetter
Noah Novitzke
Randee Radloff
Matt Wrobel

MISHAWAKA WINDOW & DOOR

Neil Ackerson
Jeff Bultinck
Alan Guerra
Shane Lane
Javon Lenoir

Dave Long
Heath Rhodes
James Taylor
Brian Yost

SHIPSHEWANA

Jade Bashore
Steve Christian
Hunter Dolson
Ryan Owen

SCHOOLCRAFT

Robert Gustafson
Dave Kronewetter
Nico Kronewetter
Chris Perez
Steve Waldron

FORT WAYNE

Jason Allen
Todd Bills
Jason Hamrick
Chris Huffman
Darrin Radke

DELTON

James Reed

KENDALLVILLE

Jace Wade
Jason Wehri

EDGERTON

Matt Franz

DOWAGIAC STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS

Steve Bakeman
Jeannette Bergman
Michael Berry
Darnesha Bradshaw
Jonah Brethauer
Chris Conn
Tim Craig
Mike Dorman
Brandon Eichel
Yasmin Escamiroso Nanco
Blaine Evans
Max Howe

Isaiah Jones

DJ Killarney

John Morales II

Derrick Newby

Delmur Phillips

Joe Rafacz III

Lucas Sanders

Steve Stenberg

Ben Townsend

Justin Vandenburg

Kevin Vandenburg

Braqsten Whitaker

Emily Whitaker

Lukas Whitaker

Brandon Younger

Bryan Younger

FORT WAYNE MILL

Daniel Bradtmueller

Nate Bradtmueller

Lou Dornseif

Tim Lange

Steve Strole