

# LBM JOURNAL<sup>®</sup>

STRATEGIES FOR LUMBER/BUILDING MATERIAL DISTRIBUTION PROS

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## IN DEPTH: INSULATION & HOUSEWRAP

As codes tighten, dealers evaluate their options and expand their product choices

## REAL ISSUES. REAL ANSWERS.

Valuing Services

## MILLENNIALS WANTED

Attracting the next generation

Manuel M. Pina, president of  
National Lumber Company

# ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

## OUR 2016 AWARDS GO TO...

National Lumber Company:  
Sales Over \$50 Million

All American Do it Center:  
Sales Of \$10-\$50 Million

Obermeier Hardware & Rental:  
Sales Under \$10 Million

# ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

*LBM Journal's* Entrepreneur of the Year Awards recognize three companies of different sizes who epitomize the entrepreneurial spirit. By our definition, an entrepreneur isn't necessarily a new business. Instead, it describes a company that excels at identifying underserved—or emerging—markets, satisfying customers, and constantly working to grow and improve its business. As in years past, our 2016 winners—National Lumber Company, All American Do it Center and Obermeier Hardware & Rental—represent vastly different operations. The common thread: a fierce commitment to finding ever better ways to serve their customers and their communities.

— Rick Schumacher, Editor and Publisher



## Expanding Beyond the Lumberyard

National Lumber Company grows with the building business.

**WHEN NATIONAL LUMBER COMPANY'S** co-CEO Steven Kaitz talks about the entrepreneurial culture at his company, the conversation always comes back to one name: Manny Pina.

Pina is the company's president and has led the way for co-CEOs and sibling owners, Steven Kaitz and Margie Kaitz Seligman, to expand locations and launch a number of profit centers including a turn-key division which provides framing materials and labor for major building projects throughout the eastern U.S.

"Manny Pina is extremely proud of his Cape Verdean descent, and has always distinguished himself; from winning medals in track and field, serving the United States as a Marine in the Vietnam War, through his legendary career in the building materials business. Manny has always been a relentless worker, visionary and leader. He has been the driving force in making our company the most innovative, forward-thinking lumber company in the United States," Steven Kaitz said. "He has driven this company for nearly 30 years and has been an integral force in our expansion."

Brought in as an operations manager in 1987, Pina has led the company through unprecedented growth, including \$290 million in sales for 2015, up nearly 6% over 2014. Pina convinced the Kaitz family to begin engineering and designing truss and I-joist systems. In-house, he hired structural

engineers, architects, expert builders and framing professionals. According to Kaitz, "we are the only lumberyard making such hires. Additionally, he successfully partnered with quality manufacturers to make National Lumber Company the leader in Engineered Wood Products."

"From Engineered Wood Products, we went on to turn-key framing," Pina added. "We do multi-family and larger home projects turn-key—we guarantee a price to supply material and erect it." Kaitz states that Pina's leadership made National Lumber the first lumberyard to introduce the concept to New England, and has grown that division since the late 1980s to a force covering a territory from New Hampshire to Georgia and as far west as the Mississippi River.

As the successes mounted for National Lumber, Pina led the company through more areas of growth, expanding their kitchen and millwork departments along with adding new companies which specialized in drywall, custom millwork, and insulation installation. "We started acquiring companies over the years, looking for strengths that would augment our business. We went out and looked for things other yards weren't doing. It's no longer the lumber business, it's the construction business," Pina said. "The more you offer in the building-critical path, the easier it is for the customer. With all the services we provide, our well-seasoned sales staff, led by driven sales managers, maintain steady growth." >



Steven Kaitz, Margie Kaitz Seligman and Manny Pina stand proudly in front of one of 90 National Lumber delivery trucks.

## ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

National Lumber Company started out in 1934 with a single location in the Roxbury neighborhood in Boston, founded by Morris Kaitz, the grandfather of current co-CEOs Steven Kaitz and Margie Kaitz Seligman. In 1953, Morris Kaitz, along with his four sons—Harold, Sam, Lou and John—opened a second location in Salem, Mass. A few years later, the headquarters moved to

**BELOW:** Truck driver, Arnie Vips, 45 years with the company, is an example of the strong employee loyalty at National Lumber.



**BELOW:** One of 40 National Lumber flatbed delivery trucks equipped with a piggy-back Moffett forklift. Pina went to Ireland 20 years ago to collaborate with Moffett Engineering Ltd. to come up with the most effective design.



Newton, Mass., following the building growth of both businesses and homes, to better serve customers from this strategically chosen location.

With a fresh start in Newton, the business thrived with its two locations until 1990. At that point they opened up a new headquarters in Mansfield, Mass., again strategically located, near the two main highways in Massachusetts in order to speed up deliveries. The 12-acre site has allowed for convenient rail access and is used as a distribution yard for National's other locations.

Steven Kaitz, who joined the family business in the mid-1970s, said the recession that followed in 1990 was the worst economic situation he had encountered in the lumber business. "It was difficult to build a brand new yard at the time," he said, "but we persevered and ultimately became even stronger as we have through all recessions."

In the early 2000s, National Lumber began growing and adding locations and business services. In 2002, the company launched Kitchen Views, a kitchen design division featuring showrooms and meeting places for builders and customers within the National Lumber stores.

In 2003, National purchased a manufacturing plant, Reliable Truss and Components. "We found that we were going to need to supply components and we found that the best way to con-

**BELOW:** National Lumber and Boise Cascade developed this FLOOR LOC pre-applied adhesive system for I-joists, which works with their P.E.T. saw to save valuable time at jobsites.



trol that supply was to manufacture," Kaitz said. Reliable Truss and Components is now one of the National Lumber family's prized companies.

In the later 2000s, as the building industry suffered through the Great Recession, National Lumber acquired several family-owned companies, integrating them into the National Lumber family and expanding the company's service area.

Today, with nine locations, National Lumber employs around 650 associates, providing lumber, building materials, engineered lumber products, engineering and design services, kitchen and bath design services, tool and equipment rentals, installed insulation, truss and wall panel manufacturing, turn-key framing and custom millwork made in their own dedicated millwork facility.

"My father, uncles and grandfather would be very proud of what we've done here," Margie Kaitz Seligman said. "With my son Benjamin now working as a salesperson in Newton, we have moved into our 4th generation as a family-owned and operated business. The leadership of National Lumber understands the responsibility it has to our 650 employees and their families. For us the workday begins at 5:00 am, and the entire National Lumber family strives to consistently be great and, clearly, we succeed." ■

**ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR 2016  
SALES OVER \$50 MILLION**

National Lumber Company

★ **Headquarters**  
Mansfield, Massachusetts

📅 **Year Founded**  
1934

📍 **Locations**  
9

💰 **2014 sales**  
\$274 million

📈 **2015 sales (projected)**  
\$290 million

👤 **Employees**  
650

[www.national-lumber.com](http://www.national-lumber.com)