



February 2026

**IN THE SPOTLIGHT**



**Cornerstone**  
Millwork & Design

## Cornerstone Millwork

Cornerstone Millwork & Design is a seasoned leader in the millwork industry, bringing over 40 years of expertise to both residential and commercial projects. The company is known for delivering high-quality, customized millwork solutions—from bespoke kitchen cabinetry that enhances home interiors to comprehensive casework and woodwork for retail, hospitality, and other commercial spaces. With a commitment to precision and excellence, Cornerstone aims to bridge the gap between clients’ visions and the finished product, transforming broad design concepts into beautifully crafted, functional elements of any space.

More than just a provider of millwork components, Cornerstone positions itself as a partner in realizing architectural dreams. Their approach emphasizes collaboration, innovative design, and the use of modern technology, all built on decades of industry experience. Whether revitalizing historic structures, contributing to new builds, or enhancing interiors, the company focuses on sustainable practices, timely project delivery, and a dedication to quality that fosters long-term client relationships.

**In this newsletter you can expect:**

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In the Spotlight:  
Cornerstone  
Millwork

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New Orders  
Stagnant

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President  
Adjusts Imports

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HR Question of  
the Month

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Skoler Abbott

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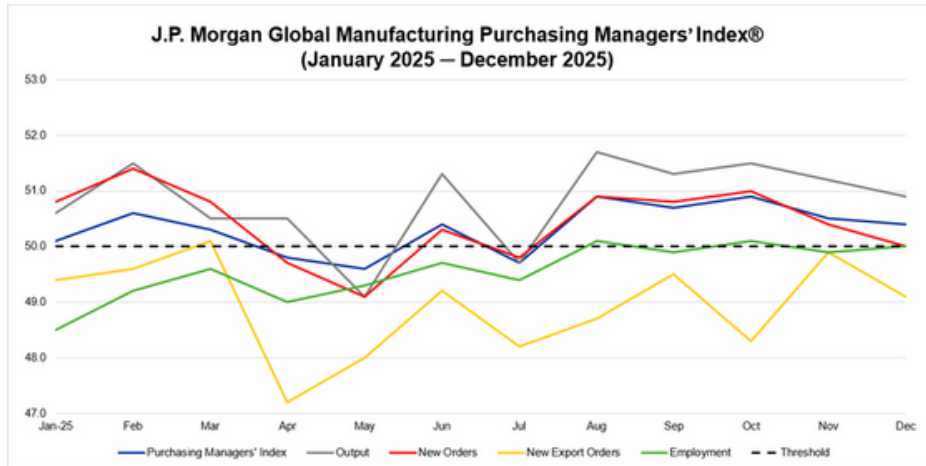
Thoughts for  
the Month

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# NEW ORDERS STAGNATE GLOBALLY AND DECLINE IN THE U.S.

Original by Victoria Bloom and Michael Green  
summary generated by AI



Global manufacturing activity continued to expand in December, though momentum softened slightly. The global manufacturing index edged down from 50.5 to 50.4, remaining just above the threshold that signals growth. Output increased for the fifth straight month but at a slower pace, as new orders stagnated amid a prolonged contraction in international trade. New export orders declined for a ninth consecutive month, underscoring persistent weakness in global demand despite overall activity holding steady.

Despite these headwinds, forward-looking indicators offered some encouragement. Business optimism remained at a five-month high, and investment goods producers returned to positive growth after recent stalling, challenging expectations that global manufacturing would stall in the second half of the year. In the U.S., S&P Global's Manufacturing PMI slipped to 51.8 from 52.2 in November but continued to indicate expansion. Production rose again, lifting inventories of finished goods for the fifth month in a row, even as new orders contracted.

However, emerging imbalances raise concerns for the months ahead. U.S. new orders declined for the first time in a year, widening the gap between production growth and order contraction to levels not seen since the global financial crisis. Export demand also remained weak, falling for the seventh straight month as tariffs weighed on sales, particularly to Canada. Regionally, Texas manufacturing activity reversed course and contracted sharply in December, with steep declines across production, new orders, capacity utilization, and shipments. While future outlook indicators in Texas remained positive, sustained improvement—especially in new orders—will be critical to translating optimism into actual growth.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**



Join us in Orlando...

WPMA Annual Meeting  
October 7-9, 2026  
Orlando, FL  
More details to follow





## PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP ADJUSTS IMPORTS OF TIMBER, LUMBER, AND THEIR DERIVATIVE PRODUCTS INTO THE UNITED STATES

Original Source: White House Website. Article summary generated by AI

On December 31, 2025, President Donald J. Trump signed a Proclamation under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, announcing adjustments to the United States' tariff treatment of timber, lumber, and their derivative products—a broad category that includes finished wood goods such as upholstered furniture, kitchen cabinets, and vanities. This proclamation delays previously scheduled tariff increases on certain imported wood products and reinforces the Administration's broader strategy to protect U.S. industries, strengthen national security, and support domestic manufacturing.

### Why This Matters: National Security & Domestic Industry

The fact sheet explains that earlier in 2025, the Department of Commerce completed a Section 232 investigation evaluating whether U.S. dependence on imported wood products threatens national security. The investigation concluded that high levels of imports, foreign subsidies, and unfair trade practices have contributed to a weakening of the domestic wood products industry, reducing competitiveness and increasing reliance on foreign sources. According to the Administration, these trends could jeopardize the nation's defense capabilities, construction industry, and economic resilience—all of which rely on stable access to critical wood

products.

Section 232 gives the President broad authority to take action when imports are found to “threaten to impair the national security” of the United States. This authority has previously been used to impose tariffs on steel, aluminum, copper, and other materials deemed critical for U.S. defense and economic security.

**Key Provisions of the Proclamation**  
Under the original September 29, 2025 Proclamation, tariffs were imposed on imported wood products:

- 10% global tariff on softwood timber and lumber
- 25% tariff on certain upholstered wooden furniture
- 25% tariff on imported kitchen cabinets and vanities
- With scheduled increases on January 1, 2026 (to 30% and 50%, respectively) unless trade agreements with other countries were reached.

In the December 31 adjustment, President Trump delayed the tariff increases on upholstered furniture, kitchen cabinets, and vanities for another year (until January 1, 2027). The current tariff level (25%) remains in effect for these products rather than rising as previously planned. This delay is intended to support ongoing negotiations with U.S.



The RAHC seeks to inspire and educate consumers and professionals on the uses and benefits of real hardwood products.

Build Your World™. That's the name of the first-ever national advertising campaign promoting Real American Hardwood® products. The campaign launched about a month ago by the Real American Hardwood Coalition on the Magnolia Network, the lifestyle channel owned by household names Chip and Joanna Gaines and entertainment conglomerate Warner Bros., to promote Real American Hardwood® flooring, cabinetry, furniture, millwork, and more.

trading partners on issues of trade reciprocity and national security concerns tied to wood product imports.

The proclamation does not eliminate tariffs; rather it extends the status quo while giving U.S. negotiators more time to secure trade agreements that could limit or modify tariff rates for partner countries. Importantly, the delay is framed as a strategic decision to maximize productive negotiation results without abruptly increasing costs for U.S. industries and consumers.

### **Context of Broader U.S. Trade Strategy**

The fact sheet situates this proclamation within President Trump's larger "America First" trade policy, which aims to align U.S. trade and industrial policy with national interests, protect key industries, and reduce dependency on foreign suppliers for critical materials. Trump has significantly expanded use of Section 232 authority during his term, applying it not just to traditional national-security commodities (like steel and aluminum) but also to newer categories like wood products.

The Administration continues to pursue additional Section 232 investigations across multiple sectors — including semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, commercial aircraft, wind turbines, robotics, and protective equipment — with the aim of identifying other areas where foreign reliance may weaken U.S. economic and defense capabilities.

### **National Security, Negotiations, and Trade Policy Dynamics**

Officials argue that domestic wood production capacity remains underutilized despite America's ample timber resources, and that foreign market distortions (like government subsidies) have pushed U.S. manufacturers into a weaker competitive position. By imposing and, in this latest action, adjusting tariffs, the Administration seeks to bolster domestic manufacturing, encourage capital investment, and promote greater supply chain resilience.

The fact sheet emphasizes that the tariff delay reflects continued productive negotiations with major trading partners, with the goal of crafting agreements that balance trade concerns while ensuring U.S. industry's long-term viability. It suggests that future tariff increases could be avoided or altered if satisfactory trade arrangements that address national security concerns are reached.

### **Bottom Line**

The December 31, 2025 proclamation is both a trade policy adjustment and a strategic pause. While maintaining significant tariffs on imported wood products, it postpones steeper increases to facilitate ongoing diplomatic and trade negotiations. Framed as protecting national security and promoting American industry, this policy fits into a larger pattern of the Trump Administration's use of tariffs and trade law to reshape U.S. trade relationships and strengthen domestic economic production.

**SAVE THE DATE**

**Upcoming Trade Show Events**

**NWFA Expo**

**April 21-23, 2026**

**Orange County Convention Center**

**Orlando, FL**

**nwfa expo**

**2026**

**ORLANDO**

**APRIL 21-23 | NWFAEXPO.ORG**

## HR CORNER

We hold a Christmas party for our employees every year. At the beginning of the party, we invite employees to pray with us. We have an employee saying that we are not allowed to pray in the workplace because it violates her personal beliefs. We have told her that she doesn't have to pray with us if she doesn't want to, but she is claiming that we aren't allowed to have a group prayer at all, even if she doesn't join. Is this true?



The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has stated that employers are entitled to integrate their religious beliefs or practices into the workplace. However, if an employer holds religious services includes prayer in business meetings, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires the employer to accommodate an employee who asks to be excused for religious reasons, including nonbelief, absent a showing of undue hardship. According to the EEOC, excusing an employee from religious services typically does not create an undue hardship because it does not cost the employer anything and does not disrupt business operations or other workers.

Similarly, an employer is required, absent undue hardship, to excuse an employee from compulsory personal or professional development training or participation in an initiative or celebration if it conflicts with the employee's sincerely held religious beliefs, observances or practices. However, the EEOC has stated that there may be cases in which an employer can show that it would pose an undue hardship to provide an alternative training or to excuse an employee from any part of a particular training, even if the employee asserts it is contrary to their religious beliefs to attend (e.g., where the training provides information on how to perform the job; on how to comply with equal employment opportunity obligations; or on other workplace policies, procedures or applicable legal requirements).



*The HR Question of the Month is provided by Zywave®, a company wholly independent from Federated Insurance. Federated provides its clients access to this information through the Federated Employment Practices Network with the understanding that neither Federated nor its employees provide legal or employment advice. As such, Federated does not warrant the accuracy, adequacy, or completeness of the information herein. This information may be subject to restrictions and regulation in your state. Consult with your own qualified legal counsel regarding your specific facts and circumstances.*

# FROM THE LEGAL DESK OF SKOLER ABBOTT

## **The NLRB is Back in Business**

After nearly a year on the sidelines due to the loss of a Board quorum, the National Labor Relations Board (“NLRB” or the “Board”) is poised to get back in the labor law game in 2026. With the U.S. Senate’s recent confirmation of President Trump NLRB nominees James Murphy and Scott Mayer (and Crystal Carey as NLRB General Counsel), the NLRB can resume deciding cases and setting national labor policy.

### **What to expect now?**

The Board will seek to enact a more employer-friendly enforcement and policy agenda. It will likely seek to rescind a number of Biden Board decisions dealing with the voluntary union recognition (Cemex), restrictions on Employer-sponsored “captive audience” meetings, enhanced relief for employees affected by unfair labor practices, and the revised rule on joint employment. This may take time because the Board must wait for a case that raises similar issues in order to do so. It cannot just strike Biden Board decisions by fiat.

In the Cemex decision referenced above, the NLRB found that the employer engaged in more than 20 instances of objectionable or unlawful misconduct during the “critical period” between the signing of union authorization cards by employees or the filing of an election petition by the union, and the union election itself. For example,

the NLRB found that the employer threatened employees with closures of certain company locations, job loss, and other reprisals if they voted in the union. What made the decision so significant was that the NLRB took the opportunity to transform the union election process. It is likely that the NLRB will now seek to rescind this decision.

### **Other 2025 Developments**

While the NLRB went quiet, 2025 was not without significant labor law developments. For instance, federal public-sector unions experienced the double whammy of DOGE-initiated mass layoffs and President Trump’s Executive Order stripping union representation from hundreds of thousands of federal employees with “national security missions.” Opponents of these actions have mounted legislative and court challenges, which remain pending.

In addition, “blue” states looked to step into the breach caused by the NLRB’s functional shutdown in 2025. New York and California expanded their state labor laws to conduct union elections and adjudicate unfair labor practices when the NLRB can’t or won’t. The NLRB’s General Counsel opposed the measures in court as intrusions into the Board’s exclusive jurisdiction. For the moment, courts appear to have sided with the NLRB.

Finally, 2026 may be a watershed year for the NLRB as the constitutionality of its structure has been called into question.

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The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled—in a case involving SpaceX—that the NLRB structure for deciding ULP cases violates the separation of powers. The U.S. Supreme Court may take the case up to settle the question. After ninety years, the way NLRB goes about its work could dramatically change in 2026.

We'll keep you posted.

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*This column is not intended as legal advice related to individual situations. If your business is confronted with a specific legal problem, take advantage of your free hour of legal consulting from Skoler Abbott.*



## JOB OPPORTUNITIES



**PARKERVILLE**  
WOOD PRODUCTS, INC.



Position: **Architectural Millwork General Manager**

Parkerville Wood Products, Inc. located, in **Manchester, Connecticut**, is recruiting a General Manger for it's Architectural Millwork department.

Successful candidate must have high ethical standards and extensive experience in managing both high-end commercial and residential projects. Working with our team, responsibilities include managing Parkerville's estimating, drafting, and engineering departments, preparing the projects for production, purchasing, time and material monitoring, and supervising production staff of approximately 7 (currently) skilled builders.

Parkerville offers competitive compensation, medical, dental, vision, long-term and short-term disability, life insurance, paid time off, paid holidays, and a retirement plan with company match. Join our team and work in a great environment in a family atmosphere.

***Interested candidates should sent their resume to David Harris, President at [d.harris@parkervillewp.com](mailto:d.harris@parkervillewp.com). All inquiries will remain confidential and will be responded to.***



*Merchants of Fine Woods*

Position: **Full-Time Lumber Mill Assistant**

O'Shea Lumber Company located at **11425 Susquehanna Trail, Glen Rock PA 17327** is looking for a full-time lumber mill assistant; must have previous experience in the hardwood lumber industry, must be able to read tape measure, know lumber species, and the basic operation of a mill, follow specific instructions and be detail oriented. Knowledge of the moulder would be advantageous. Pay rate negotiable with experience.

**Please respond with an email detailing your experience and work history, or stop in to complete an application between 8:30am and 4:30pm at our location or call 717-235-1992**

## THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

**February - when love is in the air, but so is the flu. Wash your hands.**

**Winter - the perfect excuse to cancel plans and hibernate**

**Temperature Tantrum - what I'm fixing to throw if it doesn't warm up soon**

### **Wood Products Manufacturers Association**

#### **Officers**

George Melnyk, Jr. – *President, Premier Millwork & Lumber Company, Inc.*  
Mike Schulke – *Vice President, Granite Valley Forest Products*  
Tom Slater – *Treasurer, Keiver-Willard Lumber Corp*  
John Lentine – *Asst Treasurer, Boyce Highlands, Inc.*  
Michelle Arsenaault – *Executive Director / Clerk, Wood Products Manufacturers Association*

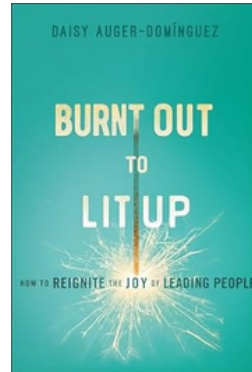
#### **Directors**

Eric Frey  
-*Cindoco Wood Products*  
Dan Robitaille  
-*Rex Lumber Company*  
Erin Barlow  
-*Barlow Architectural Millwork*  
Chris Moore  
-*Graf Brothers*  
Mike McNulty  
-*Cambio Plywood*  
T.J. Stratton  
-*McClung Lumber Company, Inc.*  
Doug Cummings  
-*Cummings Veneer*

#### **Immediate Past President**

Scott Ferland,  
*Maine Woods Company*

## BOOK REVIEW



**Burnt Out to Lit Up:  
How to Reignite  
the Joy of  
Leading People  
by Daisy  
Auger-Dominguez**

Newly released, *Burnt Out to Lit Up*, will make you feel a little less alone if you find yourself struggling to maintain the energy and enthusiasm you once had for your position of leadership. Based on research, actionable strategies, and personal anecdotes, this book might be just the thing you need to get your leadership mojo back in the new year. It's available in multiple formats; on Audible, hardcover, and Kindle.

## MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

### **FEATURED ASSOCIATION PROGRAM**

When your company becomes a member of the WPMA, you are automatically entitled to take advantage of several programs that are available at no additional cost which means these programs are included in your annual dues. These programs and services have all been designed and created to help your company save money.

#### **One of the programs includes:**

**Business Insurance / Life / Disability-** Federated Insurance® is WPMA's exclusive business insurance partner. Rated A+ (Superior) by A.M. Best® Company and named to the Ward Group® list of top 50 performers in the wood insurance industry, Federated stands ready to help you with your insurance and risk management needs.

They offer WPMA members a wide range of services, including:

- Property and Casualty Insurance
- Workers Compensation Insurance
- Bonding Services
- Life and Disability Income Protection
- Referrals to Independent Succession Planning Attorneys
- Access to a Variety of Risk Management Materials
- Computer-based Safety Training Courses