



# MOVING FORWARD

Pennsylvania Moving & Storage Associates Newsletter

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## Season's Greetings Members!

I can't believe we are in December already. This year has been challenging to say the least along with learning an entire new way to operate your business and just every day life. I look forward to a day when we wake up not hearing about the number of COVID cases. I look forward to when we can have large gatherings with family and friends. I miss going to Steeler games, tailgating and seeing people! Although maybe fans are not needed at 10-0 ☐. As I sit here in my home office I am listening to Rocket Mortgage state that 46% of Americans plan on making a move in the next year. Who knew that a pandemic would make the moving industry busy? The challenges of keeping your drivers, crews and staff safe are overwhelming at times. Make sure all your people follow the safety protocol. I want to thank all the members that have supported the PMSA. We will be working toward more virtual educational webinars in 2021. Merry Christmas & Happy Hanukkah everyone.

Check out our new website at: [www.pennmovers.org](http://www.pennmovers.org)

Please send us an email to [pennmovers@gmail.com](mailto:pennmovers@gmail.com), with any suggestions or updates that need to be made.



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## Bridge Tolling: Contact your Legislators

PMTA emailed its members a few weeks ago to inform them that the Public Private Partnership (P3) Board had made the decision to toll bridges on the interstate system and freeways. This is a decision that PMTA very strongly disagrees with. Our industry already pays more than its fair share to operate on Pennsylvania roadways and additional tolls would only add that increasing cost.

On Friday evening, Senator Michele Brooks and Senator Scott E. Hutchinson issued a memo to the rest of the state senate stating that they would be introducing a Concurrent Resolution to rescind the approval of the transportation projects adopted at the Nov. 12 P3 Board meeting.

Title 74, Section 9104 (c) provides the General Assembly with the option to overturn a P3 Board decision if a Concurrent Resolution passes both chambers within 20 calendar days or nine legislative days, whichever is longer. If both the Senate and the House adopt the Concurrent Resolution within the timeline by majority vote, the transportation project shall be deemed disapproved. This concurrent resolution will need to be addressed early in the new session that begins on Jan. 5, 2021.

Now is the time for you to make your voice heard. Contact your representatives to let them know that you support the Concurrent Resolution to Rescind the P3 Board's Approval to Toll Bridges. [You can find out who your representatives are and how to reach them here.](#)

PTMA will do its part but our voices are stronger when we speak together.

## What drivers need to know about COVID-19

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness caused by a virus called SARSCoV-2. Symptoms often include cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell. Our understanding of how the virus spreads is evolving as we learn more about it, so check the CDC website for the latest information. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

[What Long-haul Truck Drivers Need to Know about COVID-19](#)

## United Brokerage Packaging

Is offering a **2% discount** on all orders.

In order to receive this special offer, you must be a PMSA member in good standing.



## Why Strong Demand and Tight Supply Have Caused Lumber Prices to Soar

Over the past few years, lumber prices have skyrocketed. According to the [National Association of Home Builders](#), prices went up by 30% between Hurricane Harvey in August 2017 and January 2018. At the time, this price was higher than any prices on record since NAHB started keeping such records in 1995. March of 2018 saw lumber futures climb even higher, over \$520 per 1,000 board feet, up from January's numbers, which climbed between \$420 and \$460 per 1,000 board feet.

These days? Although the reasons for it have changed, lumber prices are still soaring higher and higher. Today, these higher prices are in large part due to the [pandemic creating chaos throughout markets](#). [New numbers](#) from the National Association of Home Builders shows that since mid-April of 2020, lumber prices have risen by 130%, and those increased costs have increased the cost of single-family homes more than \$16,000 on average.

With these thoughts in mind, here are some of the causes of these rising costs—and a quick look into the future concerning both lumber prices and how these prices will affect housing costs.

### Why are Lumber Prices High?

There are a variety of factors coming together all at once to affect lumber prices. Over the past few years, demand has increased dramatically while supply has tightened. For starters, growth of gross domestic product in all major economic regions of the world is fueling something of a world-wide construction boom. In the U.S. alone, single family home construction increased 7% between January 2017 and January 2018.

With the pandemic, the amount of lumber being used in construction continues to rise. Surprisingly, housing starts are up, showing an increase of about 17% between May and July. With that, other areas are placing demand on the lumber industry. More DIYers are doing projects like decks so that they have a place to get outside during these troubled times, and restaurants across the U.S. are using more and more lumber to build outdoor seating and dining areas.

Meanwhile, the lumber industry has faced struggles of its own with shutdowns and a decreased demand for timber in other areas, like paper manufacturing and home goods, where downturns have been steep. All of this is combined with the fact that several years ago, the U.S. raised import duties on [Canadian lumber](#), which has been causing a supply shortage in the U.S. as Canada exports less lumber southward.

Pandemic aside, there are also the rising costs of everything going into lumber production—labor, transportation, containers and so on, all costing more across the board, which drives up the cost of lumber regardless of supply or demand. The cost of a flatbed truck to haul lumber, for instance, went

***“We become what we think about.”  
-Earl Nightingale***

up 24% between January 2017 and January 2018.

## **Where are Lumber Prices Right Now?**

In some cases, lumber prices have doubled and tripled over the past year. OSB board prices, for example, were three times higher in September 2020 compared to September 2019. Other prices have gone way up, too. Western SPF 2x4s, for example, have gone up 158% over the past year, studs have risen 164%, and southern pine has gone up 147%.

## **Will Lumber Prices Stay High?**

Back in 2018, experts were saying that with the current chaos in the lumber markets, prices were expected to be high through 2020. After that, costs were expected to come down.

Now that COVID-19 is here to stay, however, things have become much more unpredictable. In order for prices to come down, several things need to happen. In the U.S., lumber production will need to increase to cover the lost supply from Canada or Canadian import duties will need to come down so that Canada can export more lumber to the United States. Shutdowns within the lumber industry will need to come to an end, and timber producers will need to increase the amount they're producing in order to bring costs down.

Once these things start to happen, lumber prices should fall—but when that may happen depends on when life will return to “normal,” and no one knows when that might happen or how quickly lumber prices may fall when it does happen.

## **How Does This Affect Housing Costs?**

If you're a builder, the rising lumber costs aren't necessarily bad news. Of course, the higher price means that not only are housing costs going up, but mortgage costs are rising as well. The cost of single-family homes has risen by \$16,000 on average—but the good news is that buyers are very willing to pay that higher price.

Back in January 2017 and January 2018, housing starts were up all over the country—7% among single family homes. Between May and July of 2020, housing starts went up by an incredible 17% across the country. This number is down about 4% over 2019 numbers, but it still reflects that buyer confidence is high.

Part of the reason for housing remaining steady despite the pandemic is that mortgage rates are at all time lows. In July, average rates for 30-year fixed mortgages dipped beneath 3%, which is the first time rates have gone so low since Freddie Mac started to track this data in the 1970s.

Lumber prices are up, astronomically so compared to prices over the last two decades, but they are expected to come down as the pandemic eases. Meanwhile, a high demand for new construction, particularly single-family homes, means that builders in the United States should quite easily be able to weather the volatile lumber market for the foreseeable future.

# State Police, PennDOT Announce Annual 'Operation Safe Holiday' Enforcement

With the holiday season just around the corner, while travel is not recommended in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) remind Pennsylvanians who must travel of the importance of safe driving and consistent seat belt use ahead of the long Thanksgiving weekend and the start of the holiday season.

"We can all do our part to prevent crashes and fatalities by designating a sober driver and always wearing a seat belt," said PennDOT Secretary Yassmin Gramian. "This holiday season may look a little different, but no matter how far or near you travel, traffic safety is always important."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says [staying home](#) is the best way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

Operation Safe Holiday kicked off on November 16, with the "Click It or Ticket" Thanksgiving enforcement mobilization running through November 29, 2020. State police and local law enforcement will be on the lookout to ensure drivers and front-seat passengers are buckled up, and children are secured in properly installed child safety seats.

In Pennsylvania, children under age 4 must be properly restrained in an approved child safety seat. Children under two must be secured in a rear-facing car seat until the child outgrows the maximum weight and height limits designated by the manufacturer. Booster seats are required for children ages four to eight to keep them protected in the event of a crash.

Operation Safe Holiday continues with the holiday season impaired driving campaign that begins on November 25, the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, and runs through New Year's Day. Law enforcement will conduct impaired driving enforcement details, with zero tolerance toward drivers impaired by drugs or alcohol. According to PennDOT data, there were 1,175 crashes resulting in 31 deaths during the same period in 2019.

"DUI is a serious crime that puts Pennsylvanians at risk every day, but it is also 100 percent preventable," said Major Bruce Williams, director of the Pennsylvania State Police Bureau of Patrol. "PSP and its local law enforcement partners have zero tolerance toward driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol."

Drivers are also reminded to obey Pennsylvania's Move Over Law, which requires drivers to move over or slow down when they encounter an emergency scene, traffic stop, or disabled vehicle. The goal of the Move Over Law is to protect law enforcement, emergency medical providers, and other first responders when responding to crashes.

"It takes a team effort to keep traffic flowing safely," said Major Williams. "First responders – including police, emergency medical technicians, road crews, and tow truck drivers – are at risk when responding to crash scenes, and we can all do our part to keep them safe by obeying the Move Over Law and giving them space to work."

Motorists can check conditions on major roadways by visiting [www.511PA.com](http://www.511PA.com). 511PA, which is free and available 24 hours a day, provides traffic delay warnings, weather forecasts, traffic speed information, and access to more than 1,000 traffic cameras. 511PA is also available through a smartphone application for iPhone and Android devices, by calling 5-1-1, or by following regional Twitter alerts accessible on the 511PA website.

The holiday seat belt and impaired driving enforcements are funded through PennDOT's statewide annual distribution from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). For more information on PennDOT's highway safety efforts visit, [www.PennDOT.gov/safety](http://www.PennDOT.gov/safety).

***"Experience is simply the name we  
give our mistakes."  
- Oscar Wilde***



For anyone who has not made their 2020 Annual Dues payment, or would like to advertise, please send in your payment promptly.



## 2020 PMSA Invoice

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All checks made payable to PMSA, P O Box 66, Bethlehem, PA 18016. Any questions feel free to contact us at [pennmovers@gmail.com](mailto:pennmovers@gmail.com).

You may pay dues and sponsorship online via credit card or PayPal online at <http://www.pennmovers.org/~shop/main.html>.

# Dates to Remember

**December 7: Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day**

**December 11—18: Hanukkah**

**December 24: Christmas Eve**

**December 25: Christmas Day**

**December 25—January 1: Kwanzaa**

**December 31: New Years Eve**



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**[PMSA Official Facebook Page](#)**

## Fuel Prices

U.S. On-Highway Diesel Fuel Prices\*(dollars per gallon)full history XLS

	11/9/2020	11/16/2020	11/23/2020	Change from week ago	year ago
<u>U.S.</u>	2.383	2.441	2.462	0.021	-0.604
<u>East Coast (PADD1)</u>	2.45	2.487	2.506	0.019	-0.548
<u>New England (PADD1A)</u>	2.554	2.552	2.558	0.006	-0.505
<u>Central Atlantic (PADD1B)</u>	2.645	2.684	2.705	0.021	-0.542
<u>Lower Atlantic (PADD1C)</u>	2.296	2.337	2.365	0.028	-0.556
<u>Midwest (PADD2)</u>	2.261	2.339	2.359	0.02	-0.61
<u>Gulf Coast (PADD3)</u>	2.132	2.18	2.21	0.03	-0.566
<u>Rocky Mountain (PADD4)</u>	2.372	2.49	2.515	0.025	-0.731
<u>West Coast (PADD5)</u>	2.937	2.99	3.007	0.017	-0.713
<u>West Coast less California</u>	2.572	2.686	2.713	0.027	-0.674
<u>California</u>	3.237	3.24	3.253	0.013	-0.73
*prices include all taxes					



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Manassas, VA

**SouthEast**

Charlotte, NC  
Augusta, GA

**MidWest**

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Naperville, IL

**South**

Houston, TX  
(Carrollton) Dallas, TX  
Albuquerque, NM

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