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Eastern Washington Sawmill Statistics for the First Half of Calendar Year 2001

2001 Interim Report

Produced by

The Inland Northwest Forest Products Research
Consortium, a research cooperative centered
at the Forest Products Department at the
University of Idaho, the Bureau of Business
and Economic Research at the
University of Montana-Missoula, and the
Wood Materials and Engineering Laboratory
at Washington State University.
<http://www.its.uidaho.edu/forp/consortium.htm>



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2001 Interim Report

The Inland Northwest Wood Products Research Consortium, in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resource Sciences at Washington State University, has undertaken to work closely with the forest products industry of the state of Washington to collect economic and production information related to the Eastern Washington Forest Products Industry. Started in 1999, this effort has received strong support from the wood products industry of the region. This interim report provides a summary of monthly production, shipments, raw log acquisition, employment, and payroll data for the first half of 2001 and preceding data from 2000. The year 2001 summary report will be produced following further data collection.

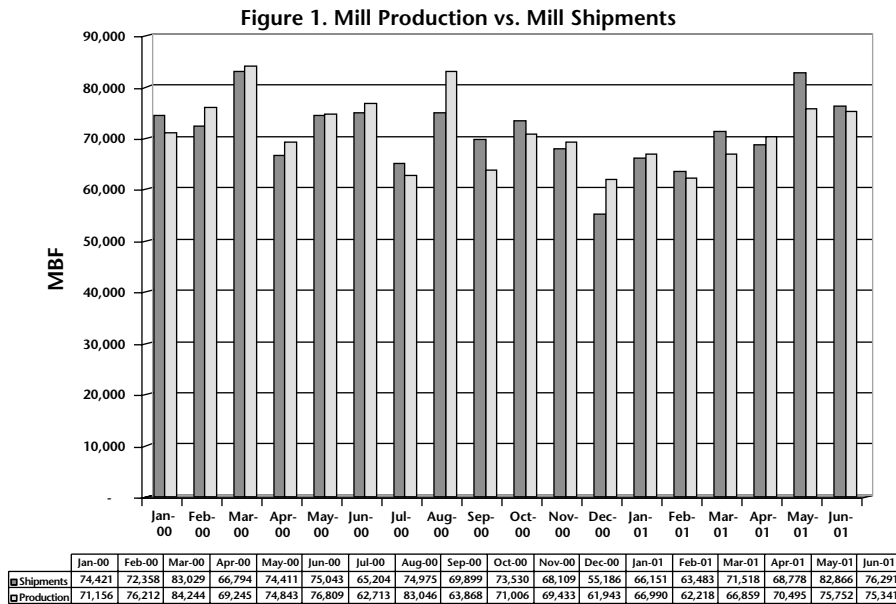
Data presented are based on a census of sawmills located in eastern Washington. For purposes of this report, eastern Washington includes all of sawmills located east of the Cascade Mountains within the state of Washington.

The intended readers of this information include the Washington State Governor's Office, the Washington State Legislature, industry members, state, federal, and tribal land management agencies, the media, and other parties interested in this important sector of the state's economy.

Results

During the first half of 2001, the 14 sawmills of eastern Washington produced 417.7 million board feet, lumber tally. This is approximately 8% less than during the same period of 2000. Average monthly production of all mills combined was approximately 69.6 million board feet, lumber tally, ranging from 62.2 million board feet in February to 75.8 million board feet in May.

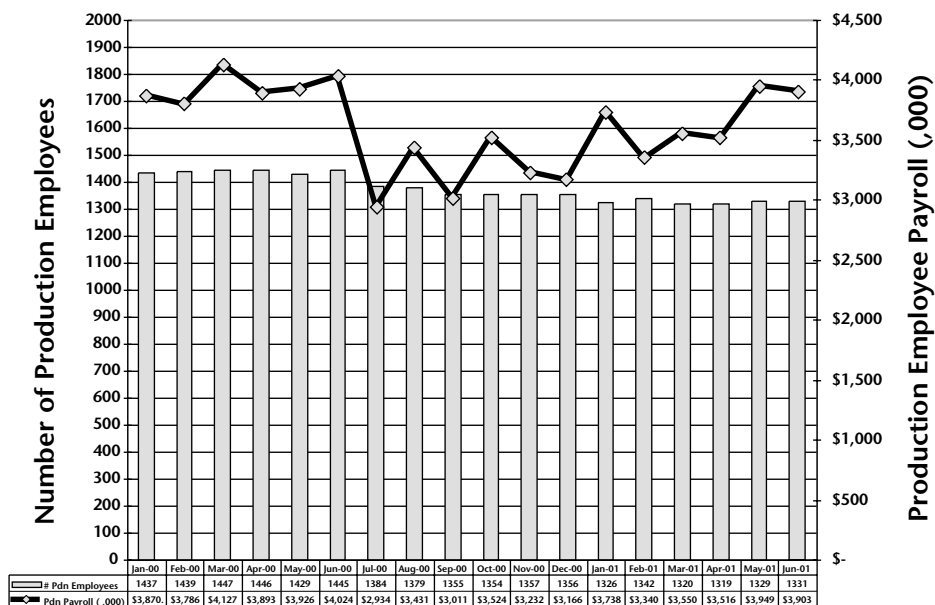
Shipments by these mills during the first 6 months of 2001 totaled 429.1 million board feet of lumber, lumber tally (Figure 1). Shipments during this period exceeded the same period of 2000 by approximately 4.0%. Average monthly shipments for all mills equaled approximately 71.5 million board feet of lumber. Total monthly shipments of lumber during the period were highly variable, with a low in February of 63.5 MBF and a high in May of 82.9 MBF (Figure 1). Shipments exceeded production by 11.4 MBF, or 2.7%.



Average monthly employment during this period was fairly constant at 1,328 employees each month, ranging from 1,319 in April to 1,342 in February (Figure 2). Employment numbers were approximately 7.8% below the same period last year. This estimate includes only employees involved directly in lumber production, such as sawyers, millwrights, and associated personnel. Total monthly payroll for these positions averaged \$3.7 million, ranging from \$3.3 million in February to \$4.0 million in May (Figure 2). Total payroll to production employees was approximately \$22.0 million during the first 6 months of 2001 in eastern Washington—approximately 6.9% less than the same period of 2000, reflecting the reduction in the number of employees during the first 6 months in 2001.

The number of hours worked by each production employee averaged 40.6 hours each week, from January through June 2001. May represented the highest average number of hours worked per week, at 43.1 hours, while February had the lowest at 38.9 hours.

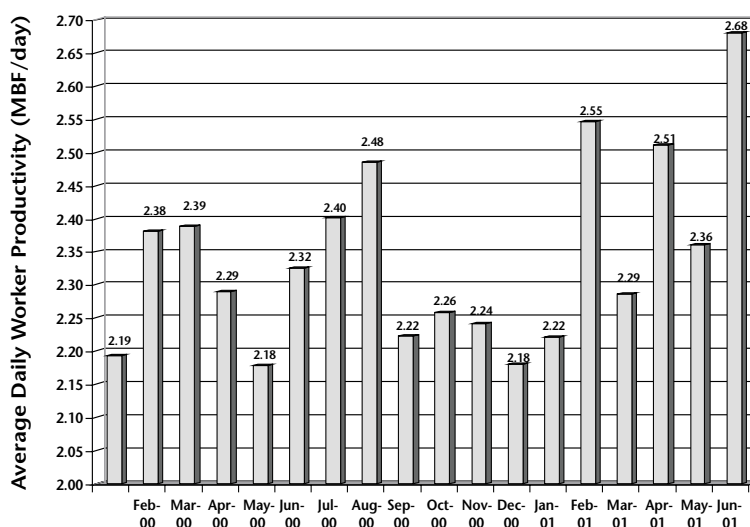
Figure 2. Monthly Employment and Payroll



Employee productivity, measured in thousands of board feet produced by each employee, averaged 2.43 MBF per worker day during the first half of 2001. Worker productivity for the region reached its peak during June at 2.68 MBF per worker day and fell to its lowest level during January at 2.22 MBF per worker day (Figure 3). Productivity per employee increased 6.2% in the region as compared to the same period of 2000.

Wages paid to production employees averaged \$16.18 per hour during the first half of 2001, based on the total number of hours worked in each month and on monthly production employee payroll. The lowest average cost per hour was observed in May, at \$14.76, while June had the highest, at \$19.58 per hour. The variability was affected greatly by differences in the number of pay periods at some mills from month to month (two pay periods in one month versus three pay periods in one month). Average hourly pay during this period was 12.9% higher than during the same period in 2000.

Figure 3. Average Daily Worker Productivity



End Note

Washington State University and the consortium members wish to extend our gratitude and thanks to the members of the forest products industry of eastern Washington for their support of this work and their assistance by providing the base data used in this analysis. As the database grows over the next few years, it will be possible to provide a somewhat more detailed analysis.

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