



The warehouse at Long Island Staples

As construction industry rebounds, supplier benefits

By: Adina Genn July 17, 2020

As Long Island's construction industry rebound, one vendor says his company, after experiencing a sharp drop, is witnessing that resurgence in real time.

John Haweeli, president of Long Island Staple, said his company has been busy since the end of May. That's when the region began Phase I of the economy's reopening, allowing the construction industry to get back to work.

"Long Island Staple's revenues were down almost 80 percent in April as core Nassau and Suffolk County markets – especially construction and commercial wood-working – shut down," he said. "By the beginning of July, revenues were back – in fact, slightly above – their robust 2019 levels."

The growth comes as US home construction has rebounded 4.3 percent in May after steep declines caused by shutdowns due to the coronavirus.

The Commerce Department reported in June that new homes were started at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 974,000 last month after steep declines in April and March. Compared with last year, however, construction activity remains 23.2 percent below last year's pace.

Home builders are hoping that as the nation re-opens, housing will post a strong recovery, helped by super-low mortgage rates. Industry analysts caution that the fledgling rebound could be derailed if infections spike again, causing potential buyers to put off looking for a new home.

Though Haweeli did not specify further on revenue, he said that the company's order intake from construction and wood-working firms jumped from 130 in April, to 437 in June.

Helping to build awareness, the company implemented a new marketing program that included adding a social media presences and a product-driven e-mail campaign.

"There's no question in my mind this has been an important aspect of Long Island Staple's improved performance" Haweeli said.

The company has also "rebuilt inventories to pre-pandemic levels to address on-going supply chain problems in an effort to minimize disruption to our customers," he said.

But as certainty abounds in the pandemic, Haweeli said he's remaining cautious.

"We're taking it month by month," he said "But the trend is positive – for now."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.