

National

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Hardwood

Magazine

"Read By North America's Major Hardwood Purchasing Agents"

ESTABLISHED IN 1927

MARCH 2021

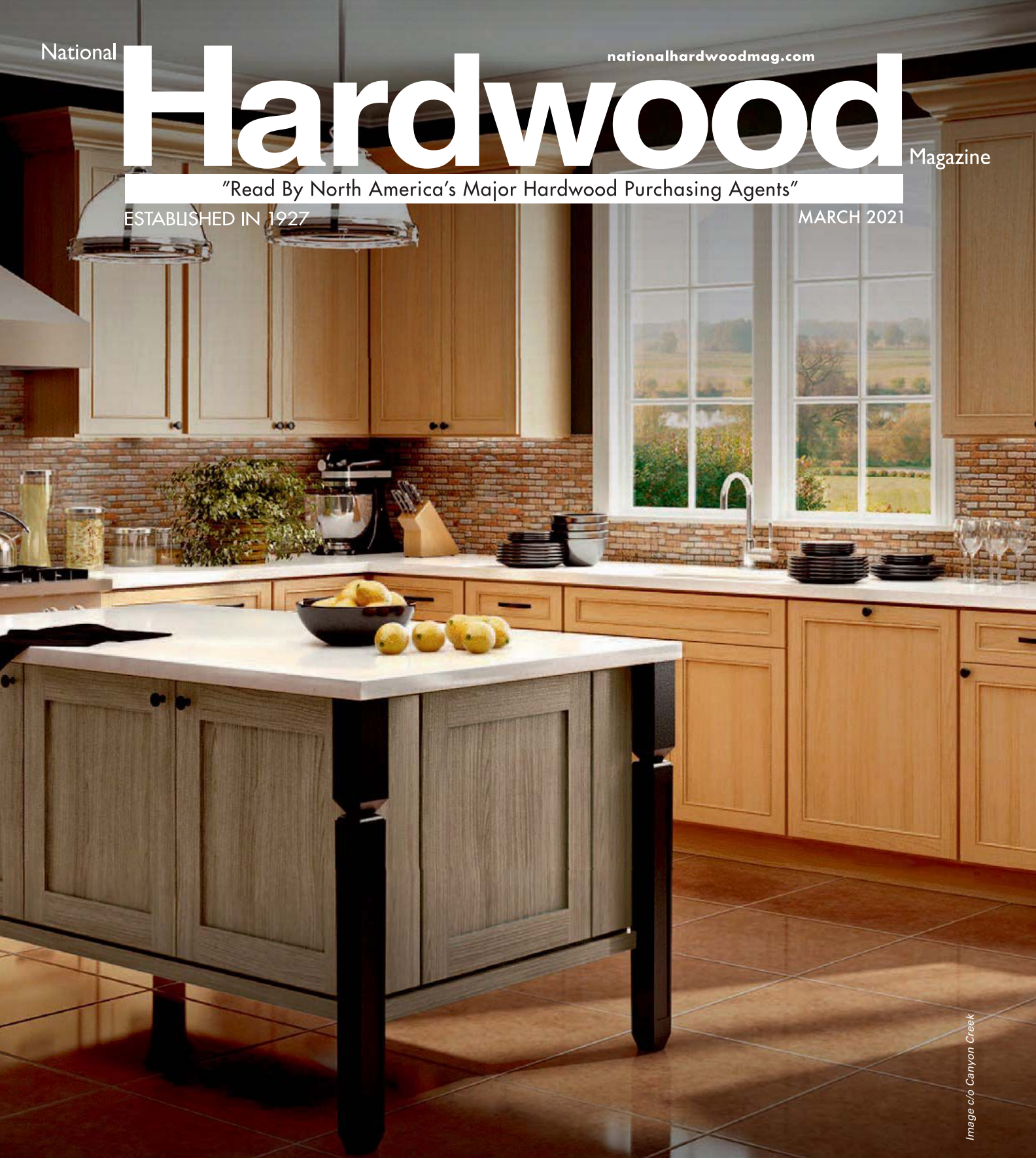


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Publisher: Paul J. Miller – 1963-2010

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Paul J. Miller Jr. – President
Terry Miller – Vice President
Zach Miller – Sales
Sue Putnam – Editor
Matthew Fite – Staff Writer
Rachael Stokes – Graphic Artist
Pamela McFarland – Graphic Artist
Tammy Daugherty – Production Manager
Jennifer Trentman – Green Book Market Sales
Lisa Carpenter – Circulation Manager
Lexi Hardin – Subscription & List Services

ADVERTISING OFFICES:

5175 Elmore Rd., Suite 23, Memphis, TN 38134
901-372-8280 FAX: 901-373-6180

Reach us via the Internet at: www.nationalhardwoodmag.com

E-mail addresses:

ADVERTISING: tammy@millerwoodtradepub.com

EDITORIAL: editor@millerwoodtradepub.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS: circ@millerwoodtradepub.com

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COMING ATTRACTIONS



Last fall, the Real American Hardwood Promotion Coalition (RAHPC) shared valuable data from research it gathered as part of its promotion of North American Hardwoods. Some of that research underscored how Hardwoods are under-represented in some Big Box stores, the preferred reference points for many of today's consumers who drive the renovation and building markets. RAHPC's research particularly noticed that under-representation in regard to the flooring category, but a little better representation was noted in the cabinet categories and the board programs.

Bliffert Lumber & Hardware has spent the past 100 years serving homeowners and contractors with the finest in Hardwoods, as well as softwoods, in various products. At *National Hardwood Magazine*, in the months ahead we plan to present additional retail lumberyards, such as Bliffert, which will be featured in our April issue. ■



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U.S.A. TRENDS

**Supplier news about
sales, labor, prices, trends,
expansions and inventories**

LAKE STATES

Suppliers in the Lake States were very upbeat and positive about the markets they serve.

"We've been busy," stated a source in Indiana. "People are looking for lumber." Compared to six months earlier, the market for her lumber is better.

She handles Ash, Basswood, Cherry, Hard and Soft Maple, Red and White Oak and Walnut primarily. Thicknesses are 8/4, 10/4, 12/4 and 16/4.

Her customers include distribution yards, end users and exporters. "We're doing more and more domestic," she said. "That's not saying it won't get exported. But we're not selling to someone overseas. We're trying to have more domestic sales. Exporting can be problematic. For example, Chinese New Year leads us to storing 50, 60 or 80 loads, waiting for them to come back from holiday."

Transportation is "a huge problem," she observed. "Shipping overseas, having trouble getting containers and bookings can be problematic. Trucking is OK at least in this area. We have a lot of trucking companies contacting us to see if we have freight to haul. So far," she added, "I don't think the railroad has been a problem."

A Wisconsin lumber supplier stated that the market for his products has "turned the corner. It seems like everybody's experiencing the same thing. Prices are moving up pretty strongly, but we're paying more for green lumber. We're dealing with a big supply issue now. People are scrambling for material. We're trying to stay on top of all that. It's a lot better than it has been. There seems to be some positive movement in the market."

Moving best for him are Red Oak, White Hard Maple, Walnut, White Ash and Soft and Hard Maple in all grades No. 2 and Better.

He sells to "a lot of end users, some export and distribution yards all over North America and internationally. We have a small distribution yard as well." Of his customers, he observed, "Everyone seems to be very busy. Everyone seems to be worried about supply."

NORTHEAST

The first quarter of 2021, the markets for Hardwood lumber in the Northeast are good.

"Very strong" is how a lumberman in Pennsylvania described the market for his products. He added that business was "much better" than it had been six months earlier.

The species and grades of lumber he supplies include Red Oak, Cherry, Hard and Soft Maple and Poplar, mainly FAS and No. 1 Common in 4/4 through 8/4 thicknesses.

He sells to distribution yards and end use manufacturers. "Their sales are going well," he noted. "Everybody figures business will be bullish at least through the second quarter. Nobody knows about the third quarter. Time will tell. Our customers' businesses seem to be rather strong right now."

Transportation isn't hampering his business. "We seem to be able to find all the freight we need right now," he observed. "It seems to be a little bit better than it was a month ago."

Another Pennsylvania lumber provider sounded a little less glowing but was still positive. "Actually," he stated, "business is pretty good. Our biggest problem is getting green lumber. But that's kind of turned a little bit. Business isn't bad, really." In fact, he said, it's better than it was six months ago.

"We're heavy into 4/4 and 5/4 No. 2 and Better Walnut," he remarked. He also sells Cherry, Hard and Soft Maple and Red Oak, which are all selling well. However, Walnut is "by far" the best seller, he observed.

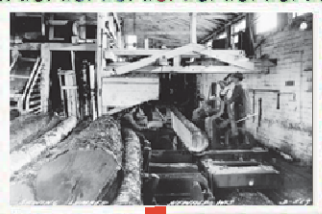
He sells his lumber to end users and distribution yards. "They don't really tell us how their sales are going," he remarked. "They're constantly wanting to buy more lumber, so I'm assuming business is pretty good."

Transportation, he noted, is not negatively affecting his company. "It's tough to get trucks sometimes," he stated, "but we're getting through it."

In New York State, one source said the market for his products is "fairly good." He added that business is better than it was a half a year ago.

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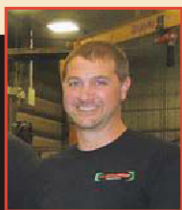
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SOUTHEAST

The markets for Hardwood lumber are strong in the Southeast, despite the fact that businesses there cannot keep enough lumber on hand to satisfy their customers.

"It's crazy," observed a lumber supplier in Georgia. "Nobody has lumber. Everybody's calling. It's just crazy. There's not anything that's not moving well except for 1x8 Select Cypress."

The market is "much better" than it was several months ago, he stated. "The problem is: it just creates a whole other set of problems. You have problems with containers, with the port, logistics problems getting things out of here.

"But domestically, things are wide open. Business is picking up strongly in China and Vietnam. Also, now you have Indonesia and Pakistan buying. The Middle East is doing well. Even Italy is back in the running."

This lumberman sells to end users, distribution yards and exporters. "I don't think the residential flooring business in China is overly strong," he asserted. "But the truck flooring in China is really strong, as it is here in the U.S. It's just kind of a mixed bag.

"People ask, 'Why don't you have lumber?' It's because prices got so cheap, COVID was an issue and tariffs were an issue. But the bottom line was: prices got so cheap that sawmills found other products they could manufacture. All your low-grade and some upper-grades went into crossties and crane mats. It takes about six to eight months to feel the impact of that business decision. You usually have lumber on the yard for four to six months. It takes a month to dry it and a month to ship it. We've worked everything out of inventory. And a lot of sawmills have been lost. The biggest reason now is: demand improved and cheap prices of lumber on the air dry yards disappeared as the market heated up."

This lumber supplier handles Red and White Oak, Poplar, Cypress and Hickory.

Transportation, he said, is "an aggravation. It's not a severe problem. It's just a headache and an aggravation. We're working through it and everything's moving."

Another source in Georgia stated that business is "re-

WEST COAST

West Coast lumber providers with whom we spoke judge their lumber markets to be in positive territory – but not way into the positive.

"It's been pretty positive," said a source in Washington. "We're shipping everything east of the Mississippi right now. That's how we've always done it. We ship lumber far and wide – from Texas to Vermont, from Wisconsin to Georgia. We're just finding tight availability. We've booked quite a few loads this month. Obviously, there's a lot of shortages, so people are being aggressive on their purchasing. They're not hesitant, even though the prices keep going up. That's why they keep buying, I guess, thinking they'll run out of lumber."

Compared to a year ago, "We might be doing a little better," he stated.

He said he's selling a lot of Poplar, Hard Maple, low grade Oak, Hickory and White Oak.

His customers, he noted, are "mostly end users." Their business "seems pretty robust," he remarked.

Transportation is "just terrible," he said. "It's hard to get trucks."

In California, a lumberman said the market is "pretty good." He observed that, "The market is still kind of order-to-order. This has been going on at least a year. But business has been consistent. You have to have inventory in order to sell in this market."

Compared to six months ago, the market is "about the same, which is OK," he noted.

He handles Walnut, White Oak and Hickory in Uppers No. 1 and No. 2 in 4/4.

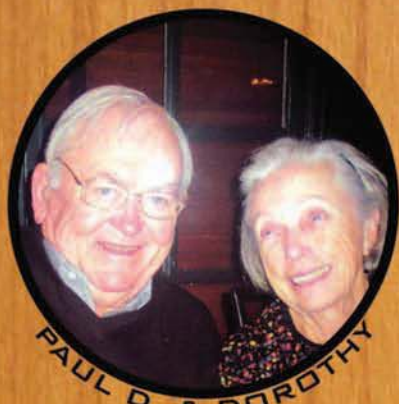
His sales are to distribution yards and flooring companies. "They say they've been pretty busy."

Transportation is not a problem for his firm. He noted, "we're really lucky. There are so many trucks here, we don't have an issue. I'm driving in the LA area and I see a trucking company that I've never heard of, and you can't believe how many trucks they have."

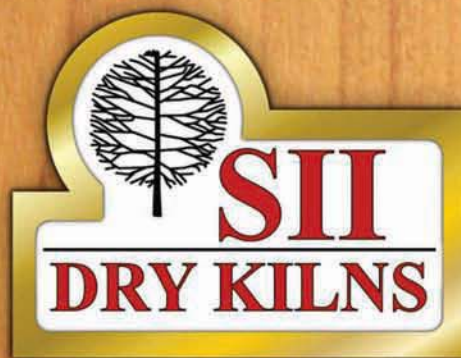
Northward, in Oregon, a lumber provider said the market for his products is "fairly strong." The market is better than it was six months earlier, he stated.

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PAUL D. & DOROTHY



TOM



PAULA



DAN



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BRIAN



JIM



MARY



BOB



KEN



TAMMY





CANADIAN TRENDS

News from suppliers about prices, trends, sales and inventories

ONTARIO

Winter weather conditions this year have been milder than last year across most regions of the province, making it a challenge for logging operations. Some noted with the colder January weather hitting mid-month, it made harvesting easier as ground conditions improved. Sawmill operators commented it was still a challenge getting log decks up to levels they wanted, however it had improved slightly to boost output, which was more than at year's end 2020. Manufacturers, wholesalers and secondary manufacturers welcomed the extra mill production.

The province issued a stay at home order on January 12, 2021 requiring residents to remain in their homes except for essential trips to grocery stores, to access health care, or to commute to essential jobs. The order, designed to protect Ontario's health care system, followed a province-wide lockdown that had started on December 26th. The province ordered non-essential construction to stop, and all businesses are required to ensure that all employees able to work from home do so. The province shifted its definition of essential construction, meaning many job sites were allowed to remain open.

With the U.S. housing market still strong, demand for Hardwood finished goods continues to rise. The demand is also fueled by the improved global economy. Sales to solid wood flooring producers, cabinet manufacturers, mouldings and millwork, and truck trailer companies are strong, commented contacts.

With the Chinese New Year celebrations, export sales saw the usual slowdown. While green lumber production is edging up, kiln-dried inventories are low, stated some buyers. The wooden pallet industry is performing well, but railroad tie activity is controlled, commented some contacts.

With the decimation of Ash by the Emerald Ash Borer in the U.S. demand and production there is not consistent. The volume of live trees in that country is greatly diminished, causing some sawmills to no longer handle this species. Contacts noted that domestic and international markets are absorbing developing supplies. However, supplies are not meeting buyers' needs for many grades

QUEBEC

With the U.S. election behind us, businesses in the Hardwood industry across Canada were hoping that trade relations between the two countries would improve. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was meeting with President Biden at the time of this writing. There is uncertainty still due to the COVID-19 virus as we move into 2021. With the vaccines anticipated to be received in the coming months, it is hoped that the country – as the world – will be able to move past this pandemic and return to some sense of a normal life. With this uncertainty, lumber buyers are taking a cautious approach to their purchase volumes until the outlook is a bit clearer. In early January, the Premier of Quebec initiated a curfew for all residents to aid in the fight of spiking numbers of COVID-19 cases. Many other provinces had also implemented lockdown measures as the number of cases was on the rise.

Sawmills are readily moving production, but demand is outpacing supply for most species in most areas contacted.

Ash supplies have improved, according to contacts, even though output is low, and supplies tight. Cherry is selling well with prices noted as climbing for this species.

Demand for the regionally important species, Hard Maple, is strong, with interest coming from secondary manufacturers and the U.S. due to a strong housing and renovation market. In Canada, home sales are also doing well, and the renovation market is very strong. As people are in lockdowns, they are spending more time at home, and many are focusing on renovation projects, which include kitchen cabinets, flooring, furnishings and other related Hardwood products.

Contacts commented that market conditions for Soft Maple are favorable. This is especially true for the upper grades. Wood component and cabinet plants are the big buyers for this species, as are furniture manufacturers. Again, prices are firm to higher. Prices for kiln-dried upper grades are also noted as having increased.

Oak is in great demand from flooring and truck trailer manufacturing companies. Supplies are tight for this species. Sawmills are struggling to get more White Oak

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NEWS DEVELOPMENTS

DURA SUPREME ANNOUNCES ACQUISITION OF BERTCH CABINET MFG.

Dura Supreme, of Howard Lake, MN, has announced the acquisition of Bertch Cabinet Mfg. ("Bertch"), of Waterloo, IA, as part of the company's expansion in the premium, semi-custom cabinetry market. Dura Supreme is owned by GHK Capital Partners LP ("GHK"), a Greenwich, CT-based private equity firm that strategically partners with well-per-

forming companies that have exceptional growth potential.

Dura Supreme procures several domestic Hardwood species for its products, including Cherry, Maple, Red Oak, Knotty Alder and Hickory. Bertch uses domestic Alder, Ash, Birch, Cherry, Hickory, Maple, Oak and Walnut, according to its website.

The acquisition of Bertch Cabinet Mfg. brings together two highly regarded companies with well-known brands

in the premium kitchen cabinetry and premium bath cabinetry market. With over 100 years of combined history and experience, Dura Supreme and Bertch brands are uniquely positioned to provide an advantageous mix of products to their dealer partners and build on strong operating platforms to accelerate growth in new markets across the U.S., according to a company statement.

"We are excited about the potential this new business partnership creates," explained Tony Sugalski, Dura Supreme CEO. "With our expanded portfolio of premium cabinetry brands in kitchen and bath markets, our ability to meet our customers' needs and grow in this segment is expanded. The combination of companies creates a unique product mix that we believe will create advantages for our dealers and customers across the USA."

"We are extremely pleased to partner with the Bertch team to build upon the company's highly-regarded cabinet brands and 40-year heritage serving designers and homeowners with premium kitchen and bath cabinetry," said Gil Klemann, Managing Partner of GHK.

To learn more about these companies, visit www.durasupreme.com and www.bertch.com.

ACQUISITION OF R.D. HENRY & CO. BY SUPERIOR CABINETS ANNOUNCED

Superior Cabinets, of Saskatoon, SK, a leading kitchen cabinet manufacturer in western Canada, recently announced in published reports that it has acquired R.D. Henry & Co., a cabinetry producer in Wichita, KS.



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The latter will continue to operate as a separate entity and as a subsidiary of Superior Cabinets.

R.D. Henry lists the following Hardwood species as purchased for use in the company's products: Alder, Cherry, Beech, Hickory, the Oaks and Quarter-sawn Oak. Superior Cabinets lists Oak, Rift Oak, Hickory, Maple, Cherry and Black Walnut among the Hardwoods purchased for its products.

R.D. Henry & Co. manufactures custom and semi-custom furniture-grade cabinetry in both full access and framed build standards for the kitchen, bath and other rooms.

Learn more at www.rdhenry.com and www.superiorcabinets.ca.

NWFA COMPLETES 53RD HOME WITH GARY SINISE FOUNDATION

The National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA), headquartered in St. Louis, MO, has provided flooring for its 53rd home in support of the Gary Sinise Foundation R.I.S.E. program (Restoring Independence Supporting Empowerment). The R.I.S.E. program builds custom, specially adapted smart homes for severely wounded veterans and first responders. The home dedication for Rock Hill Police Officer Mathew Crosby took place recently in Defiance, MO. Flooring for the project was donated by NWFA member American OEM.

Officer Crosby graduated from the police academy in 2001, serving with the Pine Lawn and Rock Hill Police Departments. On April 9, 2010, Officer Crosby was responding to a domestic disturbance when he was shot. The bullet struck his shoulder and spinal cord, resulting in immediate paralysis.

"Despite his severe injuries, Officer Crosby remains physically active," said NWFA President and CEO, Michael Martin. "He participates in CrossFit, and spends time outdoors hunting and fishing with his two teenage sons. He even began an adaptive CrossFit program for kids and adults who use a wheelchair. We're honored to partner with

American OEM to provide flooring for his new home."

In addition to the 53 homes already completed, NWFA currently is working with its members to source wood flooring for 15 additional R.I.S.E. homes in various stages of planning and construction. Currently, 141 NWFA member companies have donated product, logistics, and installation services in locations throughout the United States, with

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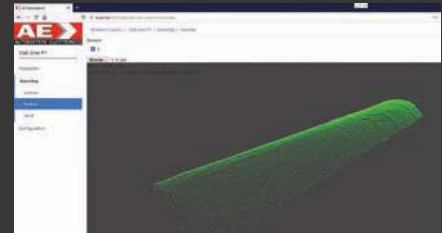
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ON THE AGENDA IN AUSTIN: MARCH 24 - 26

Later this month, our members and many other industry stakeholders will be gathering in Austin for HMA's 2021 National Conference and Expo. After such a trying year, it will be wonderful to be out and about with the industry colleagues and friends that so clearly personify "Resilience!"

As announced last month, Conference participants should plan on a hybrid event of 'live' and 'virtual' presentations. And under the guidance of the Hyatt Regency staff, COVID safety protocols will be in place to ensure that all aspects of the Conference, daytime meals, evening networking events and of course, the vendor Expo will be conducted appropriately.

On the Agenda

Be prepared to learn and laugh with Thomas Brush, consultant/coach and founder of Advancement Designs. In his interactive workshop entitled, "Being Clear on What is Real: An Overlooked Pathway to Resilience," Conference attendees will explore an overlooked pathway to achieve success.

In a presentation entitled, "Moving Forward," *ITR Economics*TM Senior Forecaster, Connor Lokar, will be analyzing the economic landscape, assessing business demand for 2021 and beyond; discussing the unintended



ed consequences and impact of the massive stimulus programs; and presenting clear, actionable Management Objectives, right for the coming years, as businesses adapt to the 'new normal.'

Joshua and Jacob Pribanic, principals of LastLine Cyber, Inc. plan to address the cyber threat landscape in a presentation entitled, "The Scary Truth About Cyber-crime." They'll identify what to look for, ways to avoid these kinds of

attacks, and provide guidance regarding implementing a cyber security strategy. (You'll not want to miss this!)

Yes, There's More

Michael Snow, Executive Director of the American Hardwood Export Council, promises to provide a Global Markets Update. Judd Johnson, *Hardwood Market Report* Editor, will be discussing the domestic Hardwood landscape. Hardwood Federation Executive Director and industry advocate, Dana Cole, will be updating us all regarding what's on the horizon in our nation's capital. And plan on hearing from the Real American Hardwood Coalition regarding the status and 'what's next' with this wonderful initiative.

If your calendar just opened up, there is plenty of room for you to join us in Austin. You'll find all of the Conference details at www.HMAMembers.org. ■



BY LINDA JOVANOVICH,
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,
HARDWOOD MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION,
PITTSBURGH, PA
412-244-0440
WWW.HMAMEMBERS.ORG





Resilience

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- Resiliency and Moving Ahead
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- The Scary Truth about Cybercrime
- Hardwood Federation Advocacy
- AHEC Global Market Trends
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- Real American Hardwood Coalition



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AHEC Reaches More Than 28,000 Viewers During On-Line Collaboration With Vogue Magazine To Present Student Designs In American Red Oak In Poland

AHEC joined forces with *Vogue* magazine to present the results of the Natural Born Collective, AHEC's creative collaboration with Polish design and timber engineering students from two key Polish universities. The graduate students worked under the guidance of renowned designer Tomek Rygalik to create four beautiful tables made with repurposed American Red Oak, from the Natural Born Red Oak chair project presented at the end of last year.

Building on the success of Natural Born, the design and engineering students received an in-depth material workshop and had the chance of visiting the furniture manufacturer Swallow's Tail to learn more about working and designing with American Red Oak. The AHEC team developed a video summarizing the project, which was premiered at the online event with *Vogue*, and which has been shared as a press story in Poland and around Europe.

The online event with *Vogue* also provided an opportu-



nity to develop a series of talks with key Polish designers and thinkers, focused on wider topics such as the importance of sustainable design. The speakers included AHEC's European Director David Venables and some of AHEC's recent collaborators, such as designers Maria Jeglinska from the Connected project, who talked in length about her experience designing with American Cherry and Magda Hubka, from Swallow's Tail, who talked about her work with American Red Oak. The event had a duration of 2.5 hours and was streamed live through *Vogue* Poland's social media channels. The recorded event

has already had more than 28,000 views and counting!

For more information on the American Hardwood Export Council and our promotional activities around the globe, visit us at www.americanhardwood.org. For membership information, contact Tripp Pryor at tpryor@ahec.org or visit www.ahec.org. ■

BY MICHAEL SNOW,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
AMERICAN HARDWOOD
EXPORT COUNCIL,
STERLING, VA
703-435-2900
WWW.AHEC.ORG





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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

The world-renowned business guru Peter Drucker once said that “Effective leaders are not about making speeches or being liked; real leaders are defined by **results** not attributes.”

Now I don't always agree with Drucker's philosophies, but in this case, he was right on the mark. Effective Board leadership is not judged by how well someone is liked. The true test of leadership is determined by how well a leader is respected for their contributions to an organization and their members. Equally important is a great leader's respect for the people who serve alongside him.

NHLA, our members and the Hardwood industry has recently benefited from a leader whose actions are a true reflection of Drucker's definition of the word.



NHLA's socially distanced Membership Director John Hester (right) presents Past President Darwin Murray (left) a token of our appreciation for a job well done.

In 2018, Darwin Murray of McClain Forest Products joined generations of Hardwood industry leaders who came before him by assuming the role of President of the NHLA Board of Managers for two years.

In his acceptance speech, Darwin outlined NHLA's recently minted Strategic Plan. For the first time in NHLA history, the plan had been developed with the participation of all NHLA member categories. Under his leadership, the plan became a living document and guide for the NHLA Board and staff. Yet another example of a true leader who knows that engaging his team is fundamental to success.

The history of our industry is one of struggle ups and downs in the markets, world wars, and regulatory challenges to our very existence. So, we should not have been surprised when just a few short months after he gave



his speech, the industry found itself in the middle of a devastating global trade war, and a little more than a year later, just as the trade war was declared over, a global pandemic.

But no matter the adversity NHLA or the obstacles we encountered, Darwin's leadership never wavered and NHLA's Board and staff never lost focus on responding to the constant challenges our members faced.

His term of service was characterized by his support and follow through of unprecedented collaboration and consolidation of efforts to make positive changes for our industry. Under his guidance, NHLA joined forces with other leading associations to fund and develop industry-wide Hardwood Industry Economic Impact Study. NHLA invested \$50,000 to support the effort.

Fast forward to 2019 and industry associations joined forces once again to create the Real American Hardwood Promotion Coalition. Association executives and industry leaders pledged to work together toward a shared goal of promoting and driving the demand for Real American Hardwood. Once again, NHLA invested \$50,000 of our members money to support the effort.

During Darwin's two-year term, more new member value was developed than in the previous twenty. NHLA mined our Inspectors' knowledge and expertise to create our Operations Management Services to increase the profitability and productivity of our sawmill members.

New webinar programs were introduced to provide a new level of education designed to once again increase our members productivity and profitability. Surveys were implemented to better understand and respond to our members evolving needs. The results were used to provide better, more timely information on issues of concerns.

Because he is a humble man, Darwin will tell the results of his term were the product of the Board and staff working together to serve our members at the highest level.

Because that is just what leaders do. ■

BY LORNA D. CHRISTIE,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
NATIONAL HARDWOOD
LUMBER ASSOC.,
MEMPHIS, TN
901-377-1818
WWW.NHLA.COM





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"For solid Hardwood in particular, AHF is making investments in innovations that are only available in the U.S."

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*- Wendy Booker,
Vice President of Marketing and Product Development,
AHF Products*



AHF Products purchases more than one million board feet of Hardwoods annually including Red and White Oak, Hickory, Maple, Birch, Walnut, Ash and Cherry. In this AHF Products photo, Hickory is the featured flooring under the brand name Hartco.



Creating Beauty That Lasts a Lifetime at AHF Products

By Michelle Keller

Mountville, PA—Established in 2019, AHF Products, headquartered here, is a leader in Hardwood flooring with a family of strong brands serving the residential and commercial markets. The company purchases more than one million board feet of Hardwoods annually. Solid, and engineered, Hardwood species include Red and White Oak, Hickory, Maple, Birch, Walnut, Ash and Cherry. AHF Products is among the leading global wood flooring manufacturers with continued investment in growth and product portfolio expansion. AHF Products operates with a 225 million-square-foot annual wood production capacity.

“With decades of experience in award-winning wood flooring design, innovation, product development, and manufacturing, we improve the quality of people’s lives through great products and a deep commitment to outstanding customer service,” Vice President of Marketing and Product Development Wendy Booker explained. “Our Hardwood flooring brands include Bruce, Hartco, Robbins, LM Flooring, tmbr, Capella, HomerWood and soon Parterre.”

Brands available include:

► **Bruce®. The Pro’s Choice.**

Established in 1884 and associated with quality ever since, it’s one of the most recognized and dependable names in flooring.

► **Robbins®. Inspire Every Step.**

This direct-to-retailer brand offers a full new product portfolio spanning domestically produced traditional visuals to sliced face double-stained wide width products.

► **Capella.**

This value brand offers a line of quality, well-designed wood flooring at affordable prices.

► **tmbr.**

A new brand directed toward the Millennial buyer, with gorgeous, on-trend visuals and a true connection to nature, according to a company spokesperson.

► **Hartco®. For the Heart of the Home. (Formerly Armstrong Hardwood)**

AHF reintroduced Hartco in 2019 with a wide range of colors, textures and surface treatments for beautiful spaces that will last for generations. Available through independent retailers only.

► **LM Flooring.**

A World of Inspiration. This global brand is on the cutting edge of market trends.

► **HomerWood.**

Uniquely Yours: This premium brand is best known for its wide-width, sawn face Simplicity product and custom capabilities.

► **And soon, Parterre.**

Art From Earth – with a focus on highly curated commercial aesthetic as well as high performance and sustainability.

Please turn to page 34



Steamed Walnut (left, darker color) is seen next to Walnut waiting to go into the steamer. Kamps Hardwoods steams all their Walnut onsite in its two steamers.

Kamps Hardwoods Sells Michigan Lumber in the U.S. and Overseas

By Daniel Connolly

Dutton, MI—Tyler Kamps still remembers his first trade show in China. It was in Guangzhou, a city of some 15 million souls. He was only 25 years old, and he and his manager Rob Kukowski of Kamps Hardwoods, located here, had come to learn about the market in hopes of increasing sales of Michigan Hardwood.

“I was amazed at how busy it was,” Kamps recalls. “The trade show was maybe 10 hours long and I don’t think we ever had a break on the first day of people visiting the booth. It was just overwhelming.”

That was in 2015. Kamps Hardwoods had been launched by Kukowski only five years earlier. The company already had a strong presence in the Chinese market but Kukowski decided to take the opportunity to visit various markets and customers in person.

Today, the company has sold to more than 25 different countries, observed Kamps, who along with Kukowski handles the company’s sales and purchasing. Based near Grand Rapids in western Michigan, the company kiln-dries and ships out about 9 million board feet of lumber a year. Kamps said the business functions as a concentration yard, as well as a distributor and a wholesaler.

The company’s major products are kiln-dried lumber

in thicknesses of 4/4 to 12/4. Major species include Walnut, which makes up about 40 percent of the company’s product mix, then Hard and Soft Maple, Red and White Oak, Hickory, Cherry, Ash and Poplar.

The company is especially proud of the Michigan-grown lumber it offers. Overall, about 75 percent of the company’s product mix is harvested in that state.

“Starting with our Hard and Soft Maple and Red Oak, those species are exclusively from Michigan,” Kamps noted. “The advantage that that offers in the Hard and Soft Maple is that you get a heavier percentage of sapwood.”

“Our Hard Maple runs 85 percent or better No. 1 White. And in each of those species, the color of the sapwood is a consistent, bright white color. In the Red Oak – being all Michigan Red Oak – it’s a very consistent color, heavy wheat.” He also noted that all the species harvested in Michigan have very tight grain patterns, due to the long winters.

“Our annual Walnut volume, being around 3,500,000 board feet, forces us to go outside of Michigan to get the volume needed,” he stated. “But we are very conscious of staying in a tight sourcing area to assure that our Wal-

“Starting with our Hard and Soft Maple and Red Oak, those species are exclusively from Michigan. The advantage that that offers in the Hard and Soft Maple is that you get a heavier percentage of sapwood.”

*– Tyler Kamps, sales and purchasing,
Kamps Hardwoods*

nut color and quality is consistent. This consistency has helped us gain a loyal base of customers who were previously looking for a solution to inconsistent coloring from batch to batch.”

The company also offers live edge slabs, which are often used for dining tables, desktops, coffee tables, etc. And because the company owns and operates its own sawmill, it can produce lumber to custom specifications and works to develop programs with customers whose needs may be outside of the standard National Hardwood Lumber Association grades.

The company distributes lumber within Michigan and also sells to many distributors throughout the United States and overseas. It also works with small and large end users in the U.S. and abroad, including furniture, cabinet, trim, and flooring manufacturers and more.

“About 50 percent of our sales are exports,” stated Kamps, now 29. “A large percentage of our exports are to Vietnam, China, Japan and various other Asian countries. We also have a stable presence in Europe and are focused on developing that market further.”

The Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development named the company the winner of the 2020 Michigan Agriculture Exporter of the Year Award. “Kamps Hardwoods was the best candidate based on their diversified export markets and steady export growth,” stated Jennifer Holton, director of communications for the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development.

Kamps said one factor that helped the company grow its export business was the state’s export assistance program. Kamps also said attending trade shows overseas helped boost the export business. How did the company find those shows? His company partnered with the American Hardwood Export Council, which offered the company exhibit space at the international trade shows.

Domestic sales are still roughly half of Kamps Hardwoods’ revenue. “Our sales base is widely represented across the U.S. and we are actively prospecting for distributors and end users in new markets,” Kamps stated.

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Grader Jack DeJong is at work in a Kamps Hardwoods’ facility.



At the 2019 MumbaiWood trade show in Mumbai, India, Tyler Kamps (left) poses for a photo with trade consultant Supriya Kanetkar (middle) and General Manager Rob Kukowski.

NHLA's Sawmill Operations Management Services is the organization's newest members-only value designed to maximize a sawmill's profitability year-round. The services help sawmills manufacture more and higher quality lumber out of their logs by maximizing yields throughout the entire sawmill operation. Maximized yield equals increased profitability at every stage of the manufacturing process. Pictured are Sawmill staff and NHLA team member Tony Parks preparing logs for yield study.



"YOU CANNOT MANAGE WHAT YOU DO NOT MEASURE":

NHLA's Assessments Help Sawmills Define Areas of Concern



By Dana Spessert
Chief Inspector
National Hardwood Lumber Association

In 1898, 59 Hardwood industry leaders, determined to create order out of chaos, took the first step with the creation of the National Hardwood Lumber Association. At the time, their sole purpose was to develop a standard set of Grading Rules for the industry. The Rules created the very foundation of Hardwood lumber value and played a critical role in stabilizing trade between manufacturers and consumers of Hardwood products around the world. While NHLA and our industry has changed many times since that date, our goal has always remained the same – to bring strength and structure to the Hardwood industry worldwide.

The creation of the Rules was just the first step of a long journey to our modern industry. It wasn't long before NHLA recognized the need for Rules enforcement

to maintain stability in the industry. Once again, NHLA responded with the creation of the NHLA Inspection Services in 1904. The NHLA "National Man" quickly became known for his integrity, superior knowledge, and ability to apply the Rules to lumber grading.

NHLA Inspectors have helped maintain Hardwood value through world wars, multiple depressions, devastating trade wars, and of course, a global pandemic. Through it all, the NHLA Rules and National Inspectors played a crucial role in rebuilding and stabilizing the Hardwood markets.

Fast forward to 2021. American Hardwood markets are more global and diverse. Our mills are increasingly more complex and technologically sophisticated. We are faced with competitors offering look-alike products that threaten our very existence. Success in this environment will be defined by our ability to accept that change is necessary.

Consider the fact that generation after generation, sawmills have focused on **producing lumber instead of making money**. There is a big difference between those two business philosophies. While every mill is different, take a moment to consider what that really means. In

"American Hardwood markets are more global and diverse.

Our mills are increasingly more complex and technologically sophisticated. We are faced with competitors offering look-alike products that threaten our very existence. Success in this environment will be defined by our ability to accept that change is necessary."

-Dana Spessert,
Chief Inspector,
National Hardwood Lumber Association



National Inspector Kevin Evilsizer measures lumber thickness. With over 15 tests available, depending upon the operation, NHLA subscribers have the opportunity to partner with NHLA's experts to deliver measurable enhancements to the entire manufacturing process.

good times, we don't always focus on what waste costs us, particularly when there is a large profit margin on certain species. It's only when times get tough that we start worrying about making money.

There is a profound benefit of establishing a business goal to maximize productivity and profitability in both **good times and bad**. Just imagine the increased return on investment!

NHLA's Sawmill Operations Management Services is our newest members-only value designed to maximize a sawmill's profitability year-round. There is no one better qualified to guide mill managers through the process than NHLA Inspectors. The services help sawmills manufacture more and higher quality lumber out of their logs by maximizing yields throughout the entire sawmill operation. Maximized yield equals increased profitability at every stage of the manufacturing process.

There is an old saying, "You cannot manage what you do not measure." This is a very true statement that should resonate with every manufacturing manager. Along with the detailed studies of how a mill's raw materials are utilized, NHLA's Inspection Services team is also offering an extensive operations assessment of our members'

sawmills and lumberyards. Our inspiration derives from NHLA's goal to address a common challenge in most mills – over edging. By focusing on every part of a mill's operations where material could be mis-manufactured, NHLA's Inspectors can identify problem areas and set tight tolerances to improve productivity and profitability.

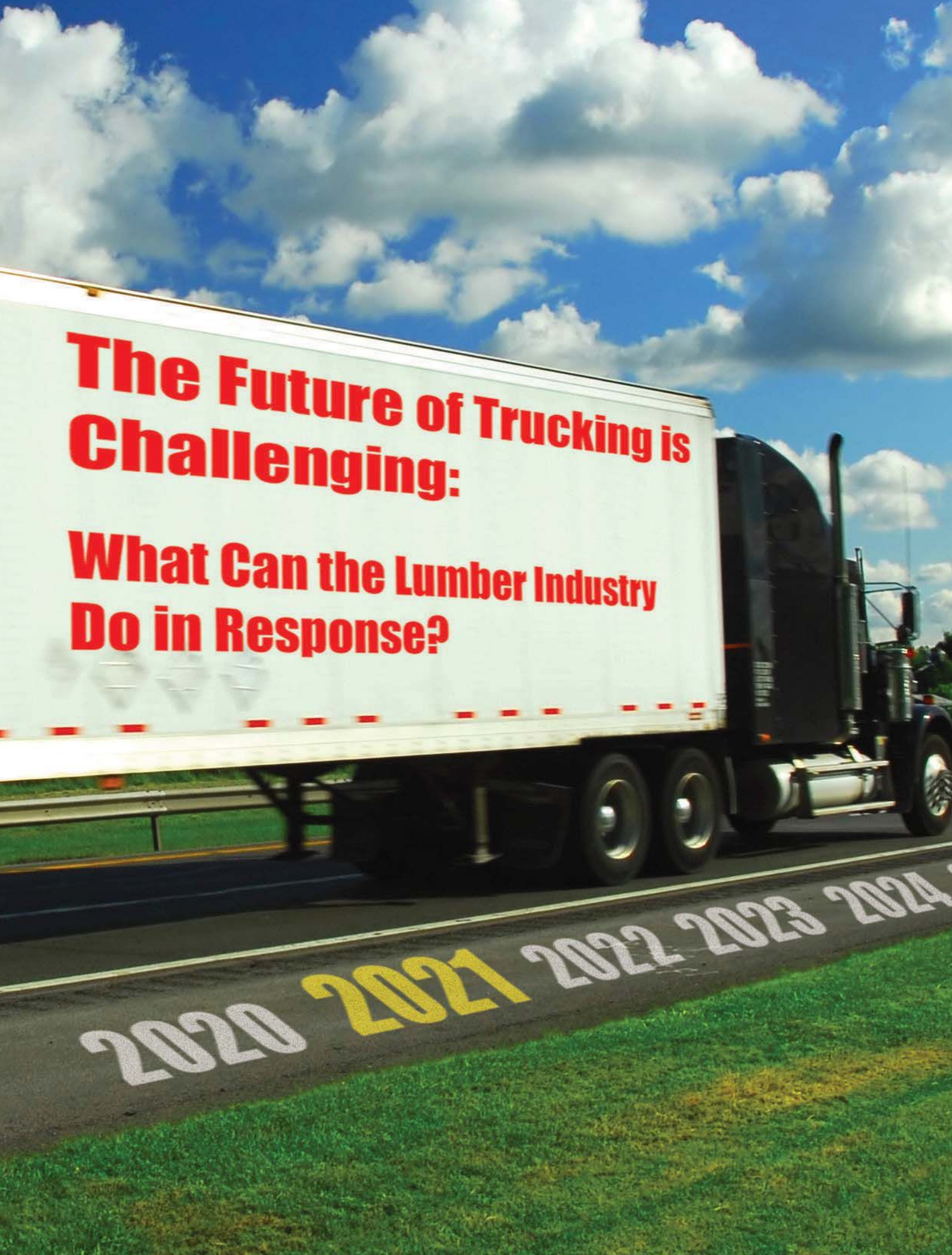
With over 15 tests available, depending upon the operation, subscribers have the opportunity to partner with NHLA's experts to deliver measurable enhancements to the entire manufacturing process.

Our Inspectors typically find the most significant losses at the outfeed or the waste conveyor coming from the mill. We typically find that the edger setup is the source of the biggest losses. Sometimes the problem results from a training issue; other times, it is a calibration problem.

After the assessment is complete, users are provided with a comprehensive report that identifies weaknesses in machine capabilities or personnel training. Mill owners are given an action plan that details the solutions needed to work with the member user to set a path of increased productivity and profitability moving forward.

Companies who have signed up for the Sawmill Operations Services save \$400,000 on average. Inspectors

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**The Future of Trucking is
Challenging:**

**What Can the Lumber Industry
Do in Response?**

2020 2021 2022 2023 2024

(Editor's Note: National Hardwood Magazine reached out to Brad Ball for his perspective on the ongoing challenges faced by all industries in regard to securing timely trucking transportation in order to move products. The lumber industry is not exempt from the national shortage of truck drivers, which can present an obstacle in on-time delivery in many circumstances. Mr. Ball offers

insight regarding expected shortfalls in manpower over the next 10 years in the trucking industry, what your company may consider implementing in order to respond to the shortfall and outlines why becoming a truck driver is a stable, long-term career. Recruitment and retention will be critical in overcoming the shortage of drivers in the decade ahead.)



**By Brad Ball, CEO
Roadmaster Drivers School
National Headquarters
11300 4th Street North, Suite #200
St. Petersburg, FL 33716 | USA
www.Roadmaster.com**

The shortage of truck drivers has been growing for approximately 10 years and while we've seen it fluctuate at times with the economy, it has remained ever present. Over the next 10 years, the shortage is expected to grow to over 150,000, due to an increasing shortfall in replacing retiring drivers, combined with industry growth. The lumber industry is hurt by the shortage as much as many other industries. To follow is an overview of the current situation regarding what some companies and the lumber industry are facing.

With the onset of the COVID pandemic we saw a temporary reduction in demand for drivers, but that was quickly reversed with stimulus checks and a dramatic change in the buying habits of Americans. Due to the pandemic, retail in-person shopping declined, and e-commerce surged. Additionally, spending shifted from travel and service industries to goods, all of which move by truck. While demand for drivers surged in the 2nd and 3rd quarter of 2020, schools were only able to enroll 60-70 percent of their prior volumes, primarily due to social distancing required in classrooms. Additionally, some schools that were forced to close were never able to finan-



Students study the pre-trip inspection to learn how to insure that equipment is safe before operating.

cially recover. As a result, the shortage of drivers has only become worse.

The upside of this is that trucking as a career is increasingly being considered as one defined by great job security and diversity. We've known the career to be somewhat recession-proof, but now it's proving to be pandemic proof as well. The average age of the over-the-road driver population is approaching 50 years old. As they retire, they are

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Housing Growth Continues in 2021: Headwinds Loom

National Association of Home Builders' Chief Economist Shares Insights



By Dr. Robert Dietz
Chief Economist and Senior Vice President, NAHB
Washington, DC
www.nahb.org
email: rdietz@nahb.org
Twitter: [@dietz_econ](https://twitter.com/dietz_econ)
Blog: eyeonhousing.org

The U.S. economy contracted at its steepest pace since the Great Depression in the second quarter of 2020, as a result of the widespread shutdowns across the country due to COVID-19. In the following quarter, led by the gradual reopening of business and revitalized spending activity, U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rebounded at a record 33.1 percent annualized pace. The U.S. economy grew at an annualized rate of 4 percent in the fourth quarter and NAHB is forecasting an annual growth rate of 3.6 percent in 2021. With a recovering economy and renewed interest in housing, the residential sector will lead the economic recovery.

shutdown during the spring, it has seen a robust rebound and record-breaking growth after a gradual reopening of the economy. Due to low mortgage interest rates, a renewed focus on the importance of home, an evolving geography of housing demand and a lack of inventory, the housing sector has been a bright spot for the economy. As measured by the NAHB/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index, builder confidence hit an all-time high of 90 in November and remained in the mid- to high 80's in December and January.

The COVID-19 pandemic not only shut down the economy but changed housing preferences. The NAHB Home Building Geography Index (HBGI) found that residential construction activity expanded at a more rapid pace in lower density markets, such as smaller cities and rural areas since the first quarter of 2020, and this suburban shift continued in the third quarter. This change is expected to continue on a partial basis in the post-vaccine economy.

Benefiting from low interest rates, low resale inventory and a changing geography of housing demand, single-family construction is now at the highest pace since September 2006 and is expected to grow moderately over the next two years.

"The COVID-19 pandemic not only shut down the economy but changed housing preferences. The NAHB Home Building Geography Index (HBGI) found that residential construction activity expanded at a more rapid pace in lower density markets, such as smaller cities and rural areas since the first quarter of 2020, and this suburban shift continued in the third quarter. This change is expected to continue on a partial basis in the post-vaccine economy."

Though the pandemic resulted in a record 20.5 million jobs being lost in April, 12.3 million new jobs have been created since May and the unemployment rate declined to 6.7 percent in December. The improvements for the past seven months reflect that the economy is recovering from the pandemic, albeit gradually. And while broad-based economic distress continues, we expect the unemployment rate to fall back to approximately 5.0 percent by the end of 2021.

Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve pledged to keep interest rates near zero and will likely not raise interest rates until the economy has recovered and the inflation rate reaches 2.0 percent. These economic conditions are not likely to be met until 2022 or beyond, indicating accommodative monetary policy that will support housing, home building and the overall economy for years to come. The 30-year fixed mortgage rate is now at record low levels, and we expect mortgage rates to stabilize around 3.25 percent due to Fed actions in the medium-term.

While the housing market was hit hard by the economic

From a rental perspective, we expect multifamily construction to decline in 2021 before stabilizing in 2022, although apartment construction will see strength in lower-density markets.

Given that the housing market entered the recession underbuilt, additional construction activity will be required as low interest rates and the economic recovery continue to fuel housing demand. The imbalance of supply and demand caused by low existing and new home inventories and strong demand for housing caused sales to outpace construction starts by a historic margin in the Fall. This imbalance between housing demand and supply could hamper future sales by driving up home prices and restraining affordability.

Meanwhile, builders continue to deal with affordability headwinds on the supply-side front, including the cost and availability of building materials, especially lumber, and rising regulatory costs. Such cost increases could impede more robust construction growth. 🏠



Wood grains warm the room as large windows and French doors help bring the outdoors inside this kitchen.
(Photography credit: Jeffrey A. Davis Photography; Photo courtesy of: By Design Studio Inc.)

National Kitchen & Bath Association's 2021 Market Outlook Report Predicts 16% Growth in Residential Kitchen and Bath Remodeling

Overall Kitchen and Bath Spending Projected to Total \$158.6 Billion in 2021

The National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA), located in Hackettstown, NJ, recently released its 2021 Market Outlook report, revealing the industry is poised for continued growth with overall spending for both kitchen and bath projects to increase in the coming year. The industry anticipates a pronounced rebound in overall industry growth- from -5.9 percent in 2020 to 16.6 percent in 2021, compared to 9 percent in 2018 and 1 percent in 2019.

Homeowners cite the kitchen and bath areas as two times more important than other spaces within the home, and the kitchen particularly gained status throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with 70 percent of homeowners considering it extremely important compared to 64 percent prior to the crisis. With a renewed focus on these rooms, the industry projects a tailwind of big interior projects, including indoor kitchen remodels. This year may see a shift from the DIY boom of 2020 toward jobs that require a kitchen and bath professional, many of which may have been postponed by homeowners during the pandemic, due to health-risks associated with having someone inside the home.

"After such a strong year for home remodeling in





BILL DARCY, NKBA CEO

2020, some wondered if we were approaching a home improvement spending 'cliff.' We're pleased to say that's not what the kitchen and bath market is expecting in 2021," said Bill Darcy, NKBA CEO. "Last year,

homeowners started the work of improving their living spaces with DIY projects. And this year, with early distribution of the vaccine and other measures to reduce the public health impact of the virus, we expect to see continued renovations and more projects requiring our members."

The study saw a number of project motivators and inspirations that continue to drive renovations:

- While larger, more professional-intensive projects are slated to increase this year, homeowners cited a desire to save money (25 percent), additional time to pursue projects (23 percent) and health and safety concerns (22 percent) as the primary reasons for recent DIY work.

- Households indicate that improving the home's aesthetics are the main motivators for remodels in the bathroom (16 percent) and kitchen (15 percent), followed by maximizing quality and durability, and increasing the value of the home.

- Homeowners completing budget-friendly bathroom remodels focused on updating cabinets (52 percent of projects) and plumbing (43 percent of projects). Smart home products (57 percent) and water filtration systems (54 percent) were the focus of premium feature upgrades in the kitchen.

- Both household income and life stage jointly influence kitchen remodel cost considerations. "Mature households," those age 45+ with no children, have the highest share of premium upgrades in their kitchens.

- Google searches and social media are the primary inspiration for kitchen and bath remodels. Households frequently indicate that they rely on more than one source to inspire a remodel. Young single homeowners or couples tend to more heavily rely on Google and Instagram, while mature adults (45+) put greater weight on other homes seen in person for inspiration.

Please turn to page 44



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AHF PRODUCTS *Continued from page 23*

With \$400M in revenue and 2,250 employees, AHF Products operates with a 158 million-square-foot annual wood output. “We’ve made investments in our U.S. plants, which are world-class plants,” Booker explained. “Some recent investments are in our drying techniques that enhance the output and quality of the lumber coming out of our kilns along with re-optimizing our chopping software to increase yields, which is important on the sustainability front and employee protection front.”

AHF also made enhancements to machinery to better align with the market trends. It increased its ability to produce on a larger scale, making adjustments to its scraping and brushing equipment to help soften textures and achieve those on-trend visuals.



AHF Products’ Oak product is shown here under the Bruce Barnwood Living brand. AHF Products is a global manufacturer with more than 70 percent of the total volume of its Hardwood flooring products manufactured in the company’s U.S. plants.

She continued, “For solid Hardwood in particular, AHF is making investments in innovations that are only available in the U.S. Visually there are certain distressed looks on solid Hardwood that have been incorporated into our new Barnwood Living™ Collection by Mark Bowe from Bruce. This

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At AHF Products, "While Hardwood has been in our DNA for over a 100 years, AHF Products is committed to investing in new products and manufacturing capabilities," said the company's marketing and product development vice president, Wendy Booker. Pictured is AHF Products' Oak flooring in the Robbins brand.



AHF Products in Mountville, PA, produces Hardwood flooring in both solid Hardwoods and engineered products and serves the residential and commercial markets. Pictured is AHF Products' Oak flooring in the Robbins brand.

can't be accomplished on solid wood overseas and has received positive feedback from our customers."

AHF also has distribution centers in Ontario, CA, and Beverly, WV. As for Hardwood procurement, the company has strong relationships with mills near their production facilities.

AHF Products was born from the sale of Armstrong Flooring's Hardwood business to AIP (American Industrial Partners) in 2018. "AHF Products, simply put, stands for 'excellence in Hardwood,' excitement, innovation, style, unique solutions – we deliver," Booker said. "Hard-

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AHF Products operates with 2,250 employees and the company's most recent annual revenue topped \$400 million. This photo features AHF's flooring product sold under the Capella brand name and is Maple.

wood always has been the most desired flooring product out there and that's never going to change. It's the authentic product that people aspire to the most, yet sometimes they settle for imitations. With such a crucial investment that increases the value and beauty of a home,

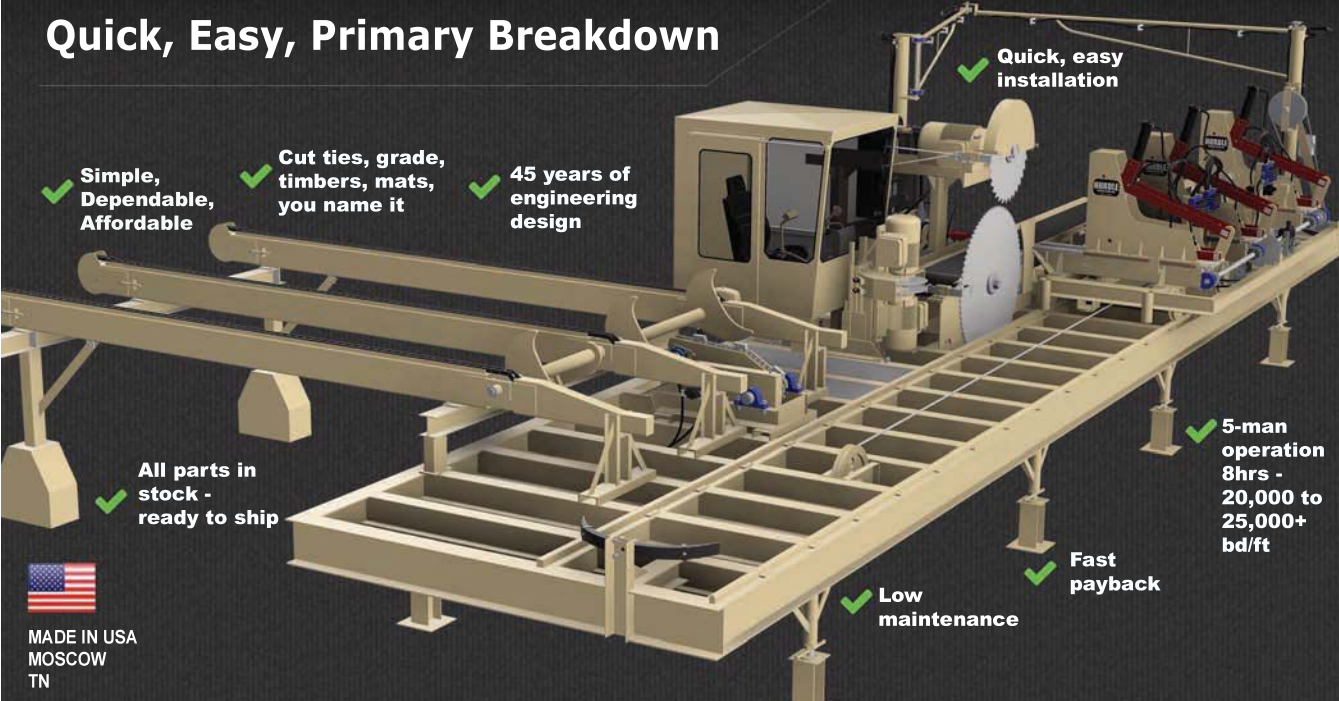
why would anybody settle for less when they could have the real deal?" she said. "Our job at AHF Products is to outperform the market, period. With the best names in Hardwood flooring and a laser focus on both solid and engineered Hardwood, we are deeply committed to de-

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living on the needs and aspirations of our customers across the nation, partnering to bring exciting brands, styling technologies and selling programs to market.”

She continued, “We’re not only the largest manufacturer of Hardwood flooring in North America but our highly respected brands have the longest legacies – Bruce is 137 years old; Robbins is 127 years old; and Hartco is 75 years old. This portfolio of top brands allows us to bring our channel partners the right style, value, innovation and marketing to enable them to differentiate themselves and grow market share.”

When asked to what she attributes the continued success of AHF Products, Booker replied, “Constant evolution. While Hardwood has been in our DNA for over 100 years, AHF Products is committed to investing in new products and manufacturing capabilities. We learn about what’s in demand and on-trend and customize that specifically for our customers. Whether it’s a product texture or color, customers can have a hands-on approach so that what we’re bringing to market is exactly what they need in their portfolio to gain market share.”

A global manufacturer with more than 70 percent of the total volume of the Hardwood flooring products coming out of the company’s U.S. plants, Booker offered, “This helps us reach all areas of North America in a timely manner. Producing domestically brings with it another benefit: supporting local businesses. The local businesses we work with, timber lands and sawmills, are family-owned and have been for generations. We take a lot of pride in working with local suppliers. The relationships we’ve formed are very personal.”

Key personnel include Brian Carson, President and CEO; Darrell Keeling, COO; Michael Bell, Chief Commercial Officer; Jeff Steed, CFO; Wendy Booker, Vice President, Marketing & Product Development; Steve Bullock, Vice President, Operations; Chris King, Vice President, Sales; Brian Parker, Director, Product Management; Jennifer Zimmerman, General Counsel; and Sara Babinski, Senior Design Manager.

AHF Products is a member of the National Wood Flooring Association. ■

For more information visit www.AHFProducts.com.

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"The biggest thing that sets us apart is our customer service."

Among the company's key personnel are Stacey Wigger, who oversees export support and acts as controller, inventory manager Kelly Barents and production manager Cory VanOverloop. Kukowski is general manager.

The company's history began with Tyler Kamps' father, Paul Kamps. In 1989, the elder Kamps started a company called Michigan Pallet Recycling. Years later the company began purchasing sawmill operations primarily to supply the pallet shops. In 2004, Paul Kamps bought Buskirk Lumber Company in Freeport, MI, which the family still owns and operates today.

That was the company's introduction to grade lumber, and for about six years, Paul Kamps sold grade lumber to various kiln operations throughout Michigan. In 2010 Paul Kamps purchased the Dutton, MI company that used to be known as Hamilton Lumber. That's when Rob Kukowski came on board. Kukowski launched the company which is now Kamps Hardwoods.

Tyler Kamps joined the company in 2010, when he was only 19 years old and a college student. He was one of only four production employees at the time, and started with simple tasks such as piling lumber, but quickly grew

into other roles.

Tyler Kamps said his father spends much of his time in the sawmills and that a key on-the-job mentor was Kukowski. Kamps said Kukowski had previously worked at another Michigan lumber company, Devereaux Sawmill Inc., and had gained extensive experience in the export business.

As for the company's current properties, the associated Buskirk lumber mill in Freeport, MI sits on about 15 acres. Another sawmill in Fountain, MI had a fire in the summer of 2019 and is currently not operating. Meanwhile in Dutton, the company's facilities include eight dry kilns, two Walnut steamers, and two air-dry sheds, plus five warehouses on a yard of 11 acres. Four of the dry kilns were manufactured by SII Dry Kilns, four by Brunner-Hildebrand.

In addition to the American Hardwood Export Council, the company is a member of the Indiana Hardwood Lumbermen's Association, the National Hardwood Lumber Association, the Wood Products Manufacturers Association and the American Walnut Manufacturers Association. It's also certified through the Forest Stewardship Council.

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Rob Kukowski is seen at the Kamps Hardwoods' booth at the 2019 MumbaiWood trade show in Mumbai, India, with Wuraola Ogundimu. She works with a trade promotion company that coordinates with organizations supporting commerce and economic development in Michigan and various other Hardwood-producing states.

adjustments to the COVID-19 pandemic and the recession. "Owning our own sawmill, we always have lumber coming in to us," Tyler Kamps observed. "Even in a pandemic we need to keep pressing onward, regardless of where pricing may be. Having good sales diversification has helped us tremendously and we are very grateful to have loyal customers helping us through these tough times." ■

For more information, you can go to www.kampshardwoods.com.

LAKE STATES *Continued from page 8*

The establishment has a company-owned transport, so they run their own trucks. This eliminates trucking as a problem. Sending containers to the West Coast or further away "seems to be a little bit of a problem," he noted.

Another Wisconsin lumberman asserted, "My market's been very good. It's definitely better than six months ago."

He handles Red and White Oak, Hard and Soft Maple, Cherry, Hickory and Basswood. Asked which species are best-selling, he replied, "I'll be honest with you; they're all selling well."

"I sell to both distribution yards and end users, more end users than distributors," he said. His customers' businesses are "really good," he stated.

"The only transportation problem is they're having a hard time getting containers," he noted. "Outside of that, we have no transportation problems right now."

Just to the east, in Michigan, a source extolled the market, saying, "It's going crazy and it seems like there's hot demand on about every item right now. It's better than it was six months ago. It seems like there's a lot of short-ages on a lot of species."

Species he handles include Hard and Soft Maple, Red

Please turn to page 41

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LAKE STATES *Continued from page 39*

and White Oak, Hickory, Walnut and Cherry. Best-sellers are Hard Maple, Red and White Oak, Cherry and Walnut.

Customers are divided evenly between distribution yards and end users. "They're busy," he said. "There are shortages pretty much everywhere, and Poplar is hard to get."

"Transportation has been fine," he observed. "It was kind of crazy for a while. But we have had no major issue in transportation lately, except that prices went up. Availability of trucking seems decent."

Over in Illinois, a lumber provider stated, "The market in the area is pretty strong right now compared to six months earlier." He commented, the market is "absolutely better."

He handles Red and White Oak, Ash, Poplar, Walnut, Cherry, Cottonwood and others. "Right now, White Oak and Walnut are extremely hot," he observed. "Red Oak is starting to trend up. Poplar is in high demand right now. So, lumber prices are on the rise because of picked-up demand and lower inventories. It's a combination of both, which is causing lumber prices to go up. Hopefully, they won't skyrocket and just steadily increase. If they don't, sawmillers can make a dollar and everybody else can, too."

Please turn to page 45



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being replaced by a young, more diverse population. The attraction, in part, being that there is no gender pay-gap tied to race or sex. Professional truck drivers are paid based on the number of miles driven.

Additionally, the investment in tuition and training time is quite low when compared to other education paths and occupational opportunities. Students can complete training in a matter of weeks and immediately start a new career with an average annual starting pay of about \$50,000. There are few other opportunities available where the road to success is so easily attainable for those that are unemployed or under-employed.

Before enrolling, prospective students are screened for employability by agreeing to a Motor Vehicle Report and background check.

Once enrolled they are required to pass a DOT Physical and drug screen. From there, enrollees can apply and receive pre-hires from trucking companies even before the first day

of school. Students then start in the classroom then move out to a closed course where they learn the basics of safely operating the truck and then move on to road training. Students generally start orientation with their new employer just

days after graduation where they continue additional paid training until they are assigned a truck.

Large carriers have been making strides on many levels to make the career more attainable and rewarding to attract drivers and improve retention. From home time, equipment, benefits and pay, the truck driving career is becoming more attractive. Most larger carriers now offer a full array of benefits such as medical and dental insurance, life insurance, 401K retirement plans, ride along policies (this is where you can bring a family member, friend, or pet), paid holidays, etc.

Improvements to equipment have also been dramatic recently, such as improved comfort and safety features, automatic transmissions and improved connectivity for drivers.

“With a shortage of truck drivers persisting, lumber and wood products companies will be forced to reevaluate their offerings to compete. If the trucks don’t move, loss of revenue may hurt more than the cost of paying more to attract the drivers.”

—Brad Ball, CEO, Roadmaster

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Even truck stops are becoming more attractive with improved food options, clean showers, WIFI and other comfort related features. Finally, we're seeing significant pay increases from many of the major carriers as they compete for a limited supply of drivers.

So, where does this leave the lumber industry? The lumber industry has had its own trouble finding drivers over the years and it's often exacerbated in the spring and summer because of produce season. With a shortage of truck drivers persisting, lumber and wood products companies will be forced to re-evaluate their offerings to compete. If the trucks don't move, loss of revenue may hurt more than the cost of paying more to attract the drivers. Companies need to evaluate the cost/benefit of lost revenue vs. higher pay and benefits to keep things moving. Of course, this has downstream effects on the builders and materials suppliers who ultimately pass on higher prices to the consumers. Until more manpower is added to the industry, driver pay and benefits must go up.

While trucking companies and schools like Roadmaster work to fill demand for drivers, barriers remain. A significant one is the minimum age of 21 to cross state lines in a com-



Roadmaster's classroom includes a mixture of computer-based and instructor led training.

mercial vehicle. There is strong support for bringing 18-20 year olds into the industry and pilot programs have begun to predict and measure potential outcomes.

In the meantime, the trucking industry continues to struggle with turnover mostly related to churn where drivers, attracted by hiring bonuses and other incentives, move between carriers. Until the supply of drivers can catch up to demand, the shortage will grow and truck drivers will remain in great demand. ■



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- Spending on new construction represents 57 percent of the total residential kitchen and bath spending at \$90.0 billion. Residential remodeling makes up 43 percent at \$68.6 billion in spending.

- Approximately 1 percent lower mortgage rates than a year ago will continue to drive demand for homes across buyer segments.

- With a record low for-sale inventory, housing stock is set for price appreciation, which will serve to increase homeowners' decisions to pursue large-scale remodels. The study forecasts an approximate 31 percent total house price appreciation between 2020-2023 driven by both the supply shortages and underlying demand.

Full wood grain cabinets in a traditional kitchen are the focus of this photo provided by NKBA. (Photography credit: Adam Kane Macchia Photography; Photo courtesy of: Sarah Robertson, AKBD, Studio Dearborn)

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NKBA commissioned the highly regarded consulting firm John Burns Real Estate Consulting (JBREC) to field the study. The data presented in this report is compiled from a variety of sources: The U.S. Census American Housing Survey home-improvement projects micro-data, National Apartment Association (NAA) spending (rental), and JBREC's home improvement estimates and forecasts of single-family rental renovation spending. In addition, a survey was conducted among 4,732 among homeowners who had initiated a home improvement project since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The National Kitchen & Bath Association is the not-for-profit trade association that owns the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show® (KBIS), as part of Design & Construction Week® (DCW). With nearly 50,000 members in all segments of the kitchen and bath industry, the NKBA has educated and led the industry since the association's founding in 1963. The NKBA envisions a world where everyone enjoys safe, beautiful and functional kitchen and bath spaces. The mission of the NKBA is to inspire, lead and empower the kitchen and bath industry through the creation of marketplaces, networks and certifications. ■

For more information, visit [NKBA.org](https://www.nkba.org) or call 1-800-THE-NKBA (843-6522).

LAKE STATES *Continued from page 41*

This lumberman sells to end users and distribution yards. "Their sales are strong right now as well," he noted.

"Transportation is a big factor," he observed. "Finding trucking is extremely difficult, trying to get product on time to your customers and at a reasonable freight rate." ■

NORTHEAST *Continued from page 8*

His products include Red and White Oak and Hard and Soft Maple in FAS and Better, No. 1 and No. 2 Common in 4/4 through 8/4.

Mostly, he sells to distribution yards, but his customers also include end users. "Their sales tend to be going pretty well right now," he noted.

Asked if transportation was a problem for his firm, he replied, "No. Here's the problem we have. There's not much spread between the green and kiln-dried prices. Margins are terrible. So, lumber is moving but there's not much room for the kiln-dried. If you add the kiln-drying to it, it doesn't bring additional profit."

In Massachusetts, a lumberman stated that the market for his lumber is good. However, he added, "It's getting

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NORTHEAST *Continued*

very difficult to find stock. That goes for just about any species or grade." He said the market is "probably about the same" as it was six months earlier. "The supply end is getting difficult," he observed.

He sells most domestic species between 4/4 and 8/4 in upper grades. The best sellers, he noted, are Soft Maple, Poplar and White Oak.

Customers are primarily end users. "As far as I know, their business is OK."

Transportation is not an issue for him, "not at all," he said.

Just to the south in Connecticut, a source stated, "The lumber market is good. Everything's moving pretty quickly; that's for sure." The market is better than it was six months ago, he added.

His sales include Red and White Oak, Hard and Soft Maple, Birch, Hickory and Ash in grades No. 3 and Better. "No question White Oak FAS is probably the hottest thing that we produce," he observed. "No. 1 Common is going OK. Red Oak FAS is going pretty well. No. 2 and No. 3 Common are going to flooring manufacturers. I wouldn't say there's anything that's lagging, quite frankly. It's all moving well."

Customers include both end users and distribution

yards. "I think the markets for their products are strong," he stated. "It's supply-driven. There doesn't seem to be enough lumber out there. Everybody's finding lumber tough to come by."

Transportation, he noted, isn't a problem for him and his business. "It's not a huge hangup, I guess," he remarked. "I don't see it as a real factor." ■

SOUTHEAST *Continued from page 10*

ally good." It's "much better," he observed, than it was six months earlier.

The company has a mill in both Georgia and North Carolina. At the Georgia mill, species of lumber manufactured are primarily Red and White Oak, Ash and Poplar. At the North Carolina mill, the species include Red and White Oak, Ash, Soft Maple and Cherry. Poplar is the best seller for this firm. The lumber provider said not enough White Oak is manufactured "to even give you a legitimate barometer" of how well it's selling.

Customers for this business include Hardwood distribution yards, end users and wholesalers. The firm sells lumber to domestic companies that, in turn, sell the product overseas. How well are his customers faring sales-wise? "The only thing I have to judge that from is their



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buying,” he stated. “And they haven’t lightened up.”

Transportation isn’t a problem for this company. “The biggest thing,” the lumber source said, “is lack of supply.”

“The market’s fantastic, the best it’s been in a long, long time,” observed a lumberman in Kentucky. “Finally, there’s some optimism in the market. It should be a good year for lumbermen. However, I didn’t see COVID coming last year. We had a dandy January, February and part of March in 2020 and then everything just went to hell in a handbag very quickly. We’re coming out of it. The markets are opening back up.”

Compared to six months earlier, the market is “better,” the Kentucky lumberman said. “The problem is: I’m out of lumber. I’m completely sold out of everything, and we’re running woefully behind in production to catch up with sales. We had lowered our inventories last fall. I ended up overtaking my air-drying yard with my kilns. Now I’m trying to replenish my air-drying yard.

“I knew the prices would go up. I knew there was a very serious shortage of lumber coming – and will remain that way because of the attrition of so much production over the last several years. As an industry, we produce 5 billion board feet, and 10 years ago we produced 15 billion board feet. Obviously, that’s not enough lumber to meet this resurging global economy. And, thus, it’s pressuring

prices tremendously in an upward manner. And there’s not a quick fix to these shortages.”

This Kentucky lumber source handles “pretty much every species of wood native to the Appalachian Mountains,” he stated. “The big three are Red Oak, White Oak and Poplar. I do a mix of Hard and Soft Maple, Cherry, Walnut, Ash, Basswood and Hickory. My market is great for any species. The markets for my customers are all very strong, including for distribution yards and end users. The markets for window blinds, shutters and furniture are very robust.

“Transportation is always a significant issue for us. We have our own trucks, so that gives us a cushion. For exports and the shipments to the West Coast, container congestion and port congestion are issues. Rates are increasing quickly on export containers. Trucking is always a problem.”

A Hardwood lumber provider in Virginia stated that the market is “good.” It’s “much, much, much, much better” than it was six months earlier she emphasized.

This company provides No. 3 Common and Better, mostly Red and White Oak, kiln-dried 4/4 and shipped green 8/4. The 8/4 goes to distribution yards. Most of the 4/4 goes overseas.

The lumber provider from Virginia said her customers’

Please turn the page

The advertisement features a large Taylor logo in the top left corner, with the word "TAYLOR" in red inside a black-outlined diamond shape. To the right of the logo, the text "WE HAVE WHAT YOU NEED!" is written in large, bold, black capital letters. Below the logo, the text "Visit us at TAYLORBIGRED.COM" is displayed, with "TAYLORBIGRED.COM" in red. In the bottom right corner, there is a section titled "Follow us on Social Media" with the hashtag #TAYLORBIGRED and icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. The background of the advertisement shows a variety of Taylor heavy-lift equipment, including forklifts and a skid steer loader, arranged in a row. The equipment is primarily red and black. At the bottom of the advertisement, a red banner contains the text "Your COMPLETE Heavy-Lift Supplier for the Forest Products Industry" in white, followed by "Capacities ranging from 4,000-lbs to 125,000-lbs all backed by our 24/7 Parts Service & Support" in white.

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SOUTHEAST *Continued*

business is good. "They can't get enough of our lumber," she noted. "We don't have enough lumber right now to ship to everybody. I can't keep all my customers happy."

However, she commented, transportation is not a problem.

Meanwhile, a flooring executive in Arkansas said the market for his products is "strong. I can't imagine someone telling you it wasn't strong right now in the Hardwood industry, in the flooring or housing industry." The market is better than it was six months earlier, he added.

He handles No. 2 and No. 3A Red and White Oak in 4/4. He sells to wholesale distributors. His customers' businesses are going strong, he noted.

Transportation isn't an issue for his firm, he stated. "It's neutral. It's better than what it was." ■

WEST COAST *Continued from page 10*

He handles about 80 different species. On the West Coast, he sells primarily upper grades. The species he sells include a full supply of domestic as well as a wide variety of imported woods. The best sellers, he observed, are Poplar, White Oak, Walnut and imported Sapele.

His customers include end users, including cabinet shop/furniture manufacturers and retail lumberyards. "I haven't talked to anybody who's slow," he observed. "Everybody has work. Some businesses are swamped."

Lumber availability is affecting his firm. "Our plant in Indiana is having trouble getting Poplar," he stated. "That's like going to a diner and they don't have potatoes. Transportation is a little slow, but it hasn't stopped us from getting anything."

"Inflation has reared its ugly head everywhere," he observed. "Plywood costs are going up, lumber costs are going up, shipping costs are going up – everything seems to be going up now." ■

ONTARIO *Continued from page 12*

and thicknesses. Prices were noted as having risen for both kiln-dried and green lumber supplies.

With the slight improvement of log decks for many species, most sawmill operators focused on processing higher valued species such as Hard and Soft Maple, Red and White Oak. This made green Basswood availability rather low. Supplies of the common grades were sufficient to meet demand. But, demand for upper grades was solid

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and thus supply strains were felt. Prices have increased for this species, and circumstances were similar for kiln-dried stocks.

With the renovation and home construction sectors improving, Birch demand has done very well. Production for this species has not been high, leaving secondary manufacturers wanting more materials. Birch prices have also risen as a result.

As for other species, the improved housing and renovation markets are key to demand for Hard Maple, which was noted as robust. Sawmill volumes have increased for this species, with buyers stating that Hard Maple supplies would likely increase more heading into early spring.

Soft Maple demand is also solid for most grades and thicknesses. Sawmills are producing more Soft Maple, with supplies edging up. Kiln-dried inventories are low relative to buyers' needs, though. The quick and strong rebound in housing activity has given a boost to Soft Maple demand.

The Bank of Canada's quarterly survey on consumer expectations showed that respondents believed they were less likely to find a new job if they lost their current one. The Bank of Canada officials wrote that people appear unwilling to change jobs until the COVID-19 situation normalizes. That means less "moving up" between jobs that the bank warned could weigh on future wage growth and lead to lower productivity that would impact the economy overall. The survey of consumer expectations was conducted during November just as COVID-19 case counts started to rise nationally, but before lockdowns in some provinces.

Asked whether new restrictions would be better or worse economically, three-quarters of respondents in the survey said they expected lockdowns now to have a similar or slightly smaller impact on their hours worked, earnings and spending.

"Most respondents do not expect the threat from COVID-19 to diminish before the second half of 2021,"

the report said.

The bank's quarterly business outlook survey, also released the same day as the quarterly survey on consumer expectations, suggested business sentiment improved in line with news about vaccines.

However, the bank said most businesses don't expect the positive impacts of vaccinations to materialize until later this year. Nor are the impacts going to be widespread. The business outlook survey noted that one-third of companies polled didn't expect their sales to return to pre-pandemic levels in the next 12 months.

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ONTARIO *Continued*

The Bank kept its key interest rate on hold at 0.25 percent on January 20th, citing near-term weakness and the "protracted nature of the recovery" in its reasoning. The economy will go in reverse for the first quarter of 2021, the Bank said, warning the hardest-hit workers will be hammered again on a path to a recovery that rests on the rollout of vaccines.

With the rollout of the vaccine sooner than they had expected, it will give way to a brighter outlook for the medium-term. Still, the Bank said in its updated economic out-

look, a full recovery from COVID-19 will take some time. It doesn't see inflation returning to its two percent target until 2023, one year longer than previously forecast, and the Bank's key rate is likely to stay low until then.

Overall, there is reason to be more optimistic about the economy in the medium-term, but it will still need extraordinary help from governments and the central Bank to get there, Bank Governor Tiff Macklem said. The Bank's look ahead rests on efforts to vaccinate Canadians by the end of the year without hiccups in that timeline, which would mean broad immunity six months sooner than the Bank previously assumed. ■

QUEBEC *Continued from page 12*

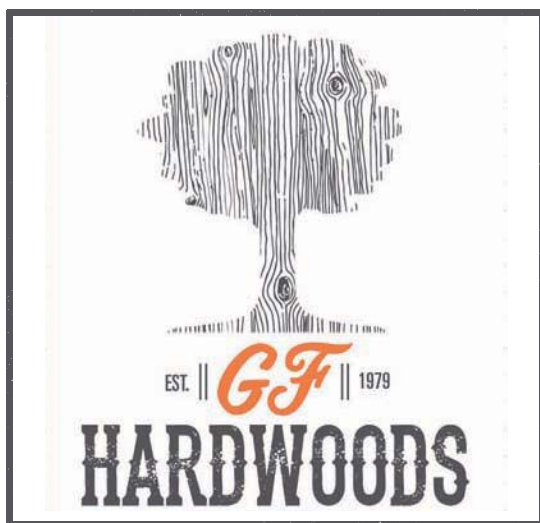
logs. There is intense competition from veneer manufacturers and log exporters for availability and driving prices higher for White Oak logs. Sawmills are finding it difficult to compete. Industry contacts stated it is a similar situation for green and kiln-dried White Oak lumber. Demand from flooring manufacturers and overseas wholesalers and end users is outpacing supplies.

The Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) expects the national average home price will rise 9.1 percent to \$620,400 in 2021, with sales also rising everywhere but in Ontario. CREA forecasts home prices to either hold steady or climb in all regions across the country, citing economic improvements from the lows of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The strength of demand, particularly for larger single-family properties, will drive the average price higher as potential buyers compete for the most desirable properties," CREA notes.

CREA has one of the most bullish forecasts, as the industry tries to understand a record-setting market against a backdrop of lingering unemployment and effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Re/Max is predicting 2021 price increases of 4 percent to 6 percent, while Royal LePage is forecasting a 5.5 percent price rise.



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CREA expects national home sales to increase by 7.2 percent to around 584,000 units in 2021. All provinces except Ontario are forecast to see increased sales activity in 2021, as low interest rates and improving economic fundamentals allow people to get into the markets where homes are available for sale.

"Ontario has seen strong demand for several years, particularly outside of Toronto, which has eroded active supply in the province. This shortage is expected to limit sales activity in 2021. The strength of demand, particularly for larger single-family properties, will drive the average price higher as potential buyers compete for the most desirable properties," CREA noted.

With prices skyrocketing in Ottawa and other large cities, it has made it a sellers' market, with costs of homes sold selling some \$40,000 to \$100,000 or more over the asking price. This does not seem to have slowed down the renovation projects by purchasers of these homes, however.

The Canadian Institute of Forestry/Institute forestier du Canada (CIF-IFC) and the Centre for Social Intelligence (CSI) announced the official launch of Free to Grow in Forestry, a microsite that communicates to all stakeholders in the forest sector the resources developed through the Gender Equity in Canada's Forest Sector National Action Plan.

The National Action Plan is a three-year initiative spearheaded by the CIF-IFC and the CSI, with strategic guidance from a National Steering Committee of forest sector leaders from government, industry, academia, Indigenous, and non-profit organizations to achieve gender equality and meaningful inclusion of women, Indigenous peoples, and new Canadians at all levels, from technical to executive level positions, in the forest sector. The Free to Grow in Forestry microsite is a culmination of this effort and will share the actions undertaken in this initiative including, but not limited to, communication "shareables" that in-

dividuals and organizations are encouraged to utilize in their spheres of influence.

Visit the Free to Grow in Forestry microsite to learn more about this initiative. ■

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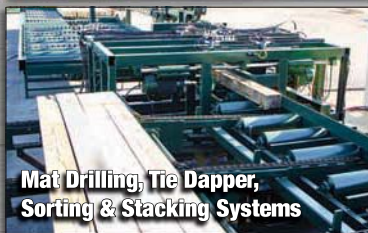
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Jimmy Kepley, owner, and Bart Jenkins, lumber sales

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Jimmy Kepley

jkepley@kepleyfrank.us



The firm manufactures 4/4 through 8/4 thicknesses.

WHO'S WHO

IN HARDWOOD PURCHASING



Andy Dickinson

ANDY DICKINSON is the green lumber buyer for **Sirianni Hardwoods Inc.**, of Painted Post, NY.

This wholesale Hardwood distribution/concentration yard purchases 10 million board feet of green lumber annually in 4/4 through 8/4 thicknesses of Red and White Oak, Cherry and Hard Maple. Lumber grades purchased are 1 Face and Better, No. 1 Common and 2 Common.

The company sells these same items kiln dried, rough or S2S in truckloads or mixed truckloads throughout North America and also sells container loads for export throughout the world.

Sirianni Hardwoods is a member of the National Hardwood Lumber Association, Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers Inc., Hardwood Manufacturers Association, Empire State Forest Products Association and the Pennsylvania Forest Products Association.

Dickinson has been in his current position for three years. He began his career in the forest products industry four years ago when he joined Sirianni Hardwoods. He has worked in various positions throughout the Hardwood processing chain.

Dickinson graduated from Bath Haverling High School in Bath, NY. He served four years in the U.S. Army. He has also completed numerous Hardwood lumber training courses.

Dickinson has been married to Ashilee for five years and they have one son.

In his spare time, Dickinson enjoys golfing, hunting, fishing and all outdoor activities in general.

Learn more about this company at www.siriannihardwoods.com.



Clay Proctor

CLAY PROCTOR is general manager and purchasing agent for **Dallas Millwork Inc.**, headquartered in Hiram, GA.

Dallas Millwork is a manufacturer of custom doors and windows. Products are not kept in-stock but instead are custom-made for each project. Every order the company receives is quoted individually and processed with one-off production techniques.

The company's annual lumber purchases include:

A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LEADING PURCHASING EXECUTIVES IN THE HARDWOOD INDUSTRY

100,000 board feet of Poplar; 150,000 board feet of Knotty Alder; 150,000 board feet of Superior Alder; 500,000 board feet of Sapele Mahogany; and 100,000 board feet of Ac-coya each year. Dallas Millwork also purchases a combined 150,000 board feet of Red and White Oak, Maple, Walnut, Cypress, white pine and vertical grain fir. All lumber is purchased Select and Better in thicknesses ranging from 4/4 to 10/4.

Proctor received his high school diploma from McEachern High School, located in Powder Springs, GA, and went on to attend Southern Poly Tech, located in Marietta, GA, for two years. He has worked at Dallas Millwork for a total of 18 years, with the past four spent in the position of general manager. He previously worked as an assistant production manager before holding the position of production manager for 24 years.

Dallas Millwork is a member of the Architectural Woodwork Institute and the Society of Architectural Historians.

Proctor has been married to Michele for 26 years and the couple has two children, Aaron and Haley. Outside of Dallas Millwork, Proctor is a college baseball umpire for the Southern Collegiate Umpires Association and coordinates umpires for scouting service Perfect Game USA in Georgia.

To learn more, visit www.dallasmillwork.com.

MERVIN MILLER is president and oversees all aspects of the business, including lumber purchasing, at **Marsh Valley Forest Products Ltd.**, located in Middlefield, OH.

Marsh Valley Forest Products manufactures custom mouldings, radius mouldings, edge glued panels, squares, stair parts, stair treads and S2S and S4S Hardwood lumber. The company purchases approximately 700,000 board feet of Hard and Soft Maple, Red and White Oak, Cherry, Poplar, Ash, Walnut, Beech, Hickory, Alder, Mahogany and Spanish cedar annually (4/4, 5/4, 8/4, No. 1 Common, Select & Btr).

Miller has been with the company and in his current position for 22 years. He began his career in the forest products industry working for his father's trim company part-time in the evenings after school.

He and his wife of 16 years, Christina, have two children. In his spare time Miller enjoys deer farming and hunting.

For more information, email: marshvalley@ibyfax.com. ■



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NEWS DEVELOPMENTS *Continued from page 15*

a total value of more than \$5.2 million. A list of all NWFA R.I.S.E. participating companies can be found at <http://www.nwfa.org/giving-back.aspx>.

To learn more about the program, and how you and/or your company can get involved, contact the NWFA at 800-422-4556, or e-mail them at anita.howard@nwfa.org.

The National Wood Flooring Association is a not-for-profit trade organization, with more than 3,200 member companies world-wide, dedicated to educating consumers, architects, designers, specifiers and builders in the uses and benefits of wood flooring.

The NWFA can be contacted at 800-422-4556 (USA & Canada), 636-519-9663 (local and international), or at www.nwfa.org.

WOOD MOULDINGS AND MILLWORK PRODUCTS FROM CHINA INJURE U.S. INDUSTRY, SAYS USITC

The United States International Trade Commission (USITC) has determined that a U.S. industry is materially injured by reason of imports of wood mouldings and millwork products from China that the U.S. Department of Commerce has determined are subsidized and sold in the United States at less than fair value.

As a result of the Commission's affirmative determinations, Commerce will issue antidumping and countervailing duty orders on imports of these products from China.

The Commission's public report Wood Mouldings and

Millwork Products from China (Inv. Nos. 701-TA-636 and 731-TA-1470 (Final), USITC Publication 5157, February 2021) contains the views of the Commission and information developed during the investigations.

The merchandise subject to these investigations consists of wood mouldings and millwork products that are made of wood (regardless of wood species), bamboo, laminated veneer lumber (LVL), or of wood and composite materials (where the composite materials make up less than 50 percent of the total merchandise), and which are continuously shaped wood or finger-jointed or edge-glued moulding or millwork blanks (whether or not resawn).

The report was due to be available by March 1, 2021; when available, it may be accessed on the USITC website at: http://pubapps.usitc.gov/applications/publogs/qry_publication_loglist.asp.

OSHA UPDATES WORKPLACE SAFETY REGARDING COVID

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recently announced revised guidance for employers pertaining to workplace safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. The new guidance is a result of an executive order signed by President Biden which directed OSHA to issue stronger guidance on COVID-19 workplace safety.

The National Law Review wrote: as with OSHA's previous recommendations, this guidance is not mandatory and does not have the same legal effect as an OSHA standard.



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However, it does give some insight into what OSHA expects to include in an Emergency Temporary Standard ("ETS") which the new Administration wants the agency to consider and potentially implement by March 15, 2021.

Most employers will be familiar with the elements in the guidance, but here are some of the significant new measures addressed in the guidelines:

- Employers should provide all workers with face coverings (i.e., cloth face coverings, surgical masks), unless their work task requires a respirator. Many states did not require this and OSHA did not previously recommend employers purchase masks.
- Provide a COVID-19 vaccine at no cost to eligible employees.
- Do not distinguish between vaccinated workers and those who are not vaccinated for purposes of implementing safety measures.
- Minimize the effect of quarantine and isolations by implementing non-punitive policies and provide paid sick leave. Employers with less than 500 employees are encouraged to provide FFCRA leave, which is still available (though not mandatory) through March 31, 2021 under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.
- Provide guidance on screening and testing.
- Assign a workplace coordinator responsible for COVID-19 issues.
- OSHA's guidance related to the COVID-19 pandemic

continues to evolve and further changes are expected with President Biden's new Administration. James "Jim" Frederick, a former United Steelworkers safety official, has been named by the Administration to act as the head of OSHA on an interim basis. Frederick has indicated that in that role he will be focused on drafting and implementing an enforceable emergency COVID-19 standard.

Learn more at www.natlawreview.com.

FORESTRY SECTOR RECEIVES MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR INVESTMENT FROM ONTARIO GOVERNMENT

According to recent published reports, the Ontario government is investing \$5.3 million, provided through the federal Forest Sector Safety Measures Fund, to help small and medium-sized forest sector businesses offset the cost of COVID-19 safety measures. The funding will be used for such initiatives as setting up sanitizing stations, providing enhanced cleaning, additional worker training, measures to increase physical distancing and to purchase personal protective equipment.

The Canadian government declared the forestry industry an essential sector due to its vital role in supplying essential forest products for hygiene, medical supplies, food packaging and shipping materials.

For information on program eligibility and timelines, please visit www.ontario.ca/forestsafetyfund. ■

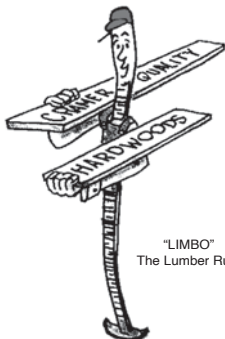
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Tracey Mueller, Log Procurement; Kevin Mueller, Mill Manager; and Randy Mueller, Sales

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TRADE TALK



Bob Hughes

SOUTH PITTSBURG, TN—

Bob Hughes, a sales representative for Cardin Forest Products, located here, recently announced that the company is now producing 4/4 rift and quartered White Oak. The company operates three bandmills, producing 22 million board feet of Appalachian Hardwoods. The firm manufactures Red and White Oak, Poplar, Ash, Hickory and Walnut in 4/4 through 8/4 thickness. The mill has 900,000

feet of dry kiln capacity and a Walnut steamer. Their services include rip-to-width and planer capabilities.

The company manufactures all Appalachian veneer logs and grade sawlogs into lumber, bringing the best the forest has to offer. For lumber sales, contact: Gene Hamaker, Kellee Griffith, Bob Hughes, Lewis Reed or Ruth Cardin at (423) 837-4041.

For more information, please go to www.cardinfo.com.



Nate Jones

UNION CITY/FRANKLIN, PA —

Ron Jones Hardwood Sales, Inc., located here, a concentration yard servicing the domestic and export markets, recently hired Nate Jones into the sales and purchasing of kiln-dried and green lumber.

Jones is a graduate of The Penn State University with majors in international business and marketing. He was a short sprinter on the track team for Penn State Behrend in Erie, PA.

He also graduated from the 192nd Class of the National Hardwood Lumber Association Inspector Training School.

Jones recently worked and trained in the production side of the company from grading green and kiln-dried lumber to kiln drying, inventory management, quality control and retail sales. In his free time, he enjoys reading, art, hiking, and traveling.

Ron Jones Hardwood Sales, Inc. specializes in the manufacturing and sales of premium Northern Appalachian Hardwood lumber. Thicknesses range from 3/4 – 8/4 and species include Cherry, Red Oak, Hard and Soft Maple, Poplar, Hickory, Ash and Yellow Birch, rough or surfaced.

To reach Ron Jones Hardwood directly, call 814-438-7622, send an e-mail to nate@ronjoneshardwood.com or visit www.ronjoneshardwood.com.

TACOMA, WA—Northwest Hardwoods, headquartered here, has announced that Todd Walker, previously exotic procurement, sales and supply manager, has been appointed to the position of senior manager, business development.

AN UPDATE COVERING THE LATEST NEWS ABOUT HARDWOOD SUPPLIERS/VENDORS



Todd Walker

Walker will take a leadership role that evaluates and advances NWH's aggressive strategic growth agenda. In alignment with the strategic agenda, Walker will drive the development of new types/areas of business and business partnerships, while working across all NWH functions and with key customers.

A true industry veteran, Walker joined Northwest Hardwoods in January of 1988. He has held several positions over the past 33 years across nearly all aspects of the business. Most recently he managed the procurement and sales for the exotic lumber business.

For more information, visit www.northwesthardwoods.com.



Hugh Hawley

EAU CLAIRE, WI—McDonough Manufacturing, based here, recently announced the appointment of Hugh Hawley as vice president operations. Hawley began his career at McDonough in 2007 as the general manager of the edger division before being named general manager at McDonough Canada Ltd. in 2017. McDonough Manufacturing produces edgers, resaws, bandmills, gangs, carriages and material handling.

A graduate of the forest engineering program at the University of New Brunswick, Hawley spent his career in the lumber



A McDonough 6-7A bandmill was installed at Meherrin River Forest Products in Macon, NC. *Photo by Vadim Kovalev, Koval Digital*

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TRADE TALK CONTINUED

industry as a sawmill supervisor before moving into sawmill machinery manufacturing. Previously, Hawley worked for Valley Machine Works, Shubenacadie Lumber Company, Groupe Level and J.D. Irving. His first job in the forest products industry was as a planer mill supervisor with J.D. Irving.

Hawley was a member of the University of New Brunswick Woodsmen (team captain and coach) and is currently enrolled in the Wallace McCain Institute's Strategic Executive Program. In his free time, Hawley enjoys hunting, fishing and coaching baseball.

Also, Meherrin River Forest Products in Macon, NC recently installed a new McDonough 6-7A bandmill. Replacing an existing circle saw, this piece of equipment will allow them to reduce their kerf and increase their yield to make more lumber and less sawdust. Installation was done by Ray Tharpe, RTM Industrial Maintenance.

For over 100 years, McDonough has been known as the "bandmill company" in the lumber industry, with more McDonough headrigs in mills than any other brand. Meherrin River Forest Products operates three mills in Alberta, VA; Macon, NC; and Weldon, NC, producing over 40 million board feet of lumber annually.

For more information, visit www.mcdonough-mfg.com.

WOODLAND, WA — Piedmont Hardwood of Mount Pleasant, NC recently updated its sawmill with a new Multi-Track Fence from USNR, headquartered here. The mill was looking to improve the accuracy and throughput of its trimmer line, and efficiencies and productivity at its stacker.

The renowned Multi-Track Fence has been installed in more than 160 applications globally, and USNR's broad range of stacker designs number over 300 installations. As part of this project the control system was updated to Control-Logix, and the WinTally sorter management system was also installed.

USNR's Multi-Track Fence is a cost-

effective solution for mills that require a rapid, highly accurate fencing system for the most demanding applications. According to the company, it is an excellent choice for high-speed optimized applications offering infinite resolution and guaranteed at +/- 0.125" (3 mm) accuracy.

With the WinTally system all sorting is done in the tally instead of the PLC. This reduces PLC scan time and decreases the amount of PLC memory required. WinTally also allows for limitless functionality and complexity in sorting algorithms, offering customers the capability to manage a very wide range of sorts.

Piedmont Hardwood also recently updated its operation with new BioLuma optimization technology on its edger and trimmer. The mill processes Hardwoods and southern yellow pine into a variety of lumber products.

Learn more about the products and services of USNR at www.usnr.com.



Paul Cleereman

NEWALD, WI—Cleereman Industries, headquartered here, recently performed these installations, according to Vice President Paul Cleereman:

- Reynolds Brothers Lumber, Ellisnore, MO: Cleereman Model-AS-360 Carriage, Cleereman Carriage Controls;
- Gessner Logging & Sawmill Inc., Lykens, PA: Cleereman Model

LP-42 Linear Tilt Carriage, Cleereman Modular Track-Frame, Cleereman Sawyer Booth, Cleereman Controls Carriage Control Package, Cleereman 150 HP Hydrostatic Carriage Drive, Cleereman Dual Cable Tensioner, and

- Collins Brothers Sawmill, L'Anse, MI: Cleereman Controls Carriage Controls Package with 3-D Scanning.

Rich in logging and sawmill history, Cleereman Industries has developed and manufactured sawmill machinery for over 60 years using three guiding principles:

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In Memoriam

John Arthur Seifert, 77, of Ray, OH passed away on January 26, 2021 at his home, surrounded by family, following a battle with Leukemia for the past year. Seifert was born on August 20, 1943 in Taylorville, IL to Ludwig J. and Vera I. (Seeger) Seifert.

On September 3, 1977, Seifert married Catherine Ann Quinn of Tupper Lake, NY, who survives him. Seifert graduated from Wilson High School in West Lawn, PA, and received an Associate Degree in Forestry from Paul Smith's College in Paul Smiths, NY. The day after college graduation, he began his career, first working at the Adirondack Jamestown in Tupper Lake, NY, then advancing to The Draper Corporation, also in Tupper Lake. In 1976 Seifert moved to Munising, MI to become the maintenance supervisor at Cliffs Forest Products, owned by Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company. The next step in his career took Seifert and his family to Union City, IN where he was the mill superintendent for Frank Miller Lumber. After 36 years working in a sawmill, Seifert ventured into sawmill equipment sales, working for Silvatech, Lyons Equipment, Inovec, finally retiring from USNR. Throughout his career, Seifert could always be found answering other sawmillers' questions or just gabbing with a fellow sawmiller or sawmill equipment manufacturer.

In addition to his parents and his parents-in-law, Patrick E. and Louise M. (Martin) Quinn, Seifert was preceded in death by a brother-in-law, Michael J. Quinn, and a nephew, David Quinn.

Surviving John are 4 children, N. Scott Seifert of Tupper Lake, NY, Kristina K. Pratt of Rensselaer, IN, Crystal M. (Michael) Baker of Fairmont, WV, and Matthew J. Seifert of Athens, OH, and 8 grandchildren.

Seifert also has a sister and brother-in-law in Phoenix, AZ, Judith and Paul Miller, a sister-in-law Mary Lou Quinn of Madison, WI, brothers-in-law Pat (Loni) Quinn of Millford, NH, Paul (Jane) Quinn of Old Forge, NY, John (Rita) Quinn of Tupper Lake, NY, Carolyn (Michael) Quinn of Maineville, OH, and Dennis (Karen) Quinn of Niskayuna, NY. He also leaves behind 10 nieces and 4 nephews, several cousins, and grand-nephews.

Seifert was a member of St. Peter Catholic Church in Chillicothe, OH where a Mass of the Christian Burial was planned with Fr. Brian Beal officiating. Funeral arrangements were under the direction of Haller Funeral Home & Crematory.

Seifert's wishes were to have memorial contributions made to the: Adena Health Foundation-Cancer Fund, 9 S. Paint St., Chillicothe, OH, 45601; or to The Ohio State University Medical Center, Acute Myeloid Leukemia Fund, fund number 311829, PO Box 710811, Columbus, OH 43271.



Keith M. Swaner

Keith M. Swaner, owner and CEO of Swaner Hardwood Co. Inc., headquartered in Burbank, CA, recently passed away.

The National Hardwood Lumber Association released the following statement:

Keith passed away January 6, 2021, at the age of 93. In the early 1950s he was a sales representative for E. L. Bruce

Company, and in 1962 he became general manager, vice president of Angelus Hardwood. Five years later, he took a leap of faith with ten thousand dollars he borrowed and started his own business, Swaner Hardwood Company. Keith later purchased a sawmill, Goodyear Nelson, in addition to a Hardwood plywood manufacturing plant, Mount Baker Products.

Before the pandemic, Keith still came to the office every day. He loved being with his grandsons, Gary II and George Swaner, and Keith and Ryan Haag, along with his son, Gary. It is safe to say he had sawdust in his veins.

Keith was an active volunteer of the Verdugo Hills Council Boy Scouts of America, having served as its president as well as receiving the Silver Beaver and Silver Antelope awards, two of its highest honors. The Los Angeles Hardwood Lumberman's Club also presented Keith with Lumberman of the Year. He was proud of being a WWII Navy veteran who joined at age 17 and served in the Pacific on the hospital ship USS Repose.

Keith lived his Christian faith and was generous to a fault. He adored his family. His lovely wife, Beverly, preceded him in death. He is survived by his two children and their spouses, seven grandchildren and their spouses, and 17 great-grandchildren, who all loved him dearly. ■



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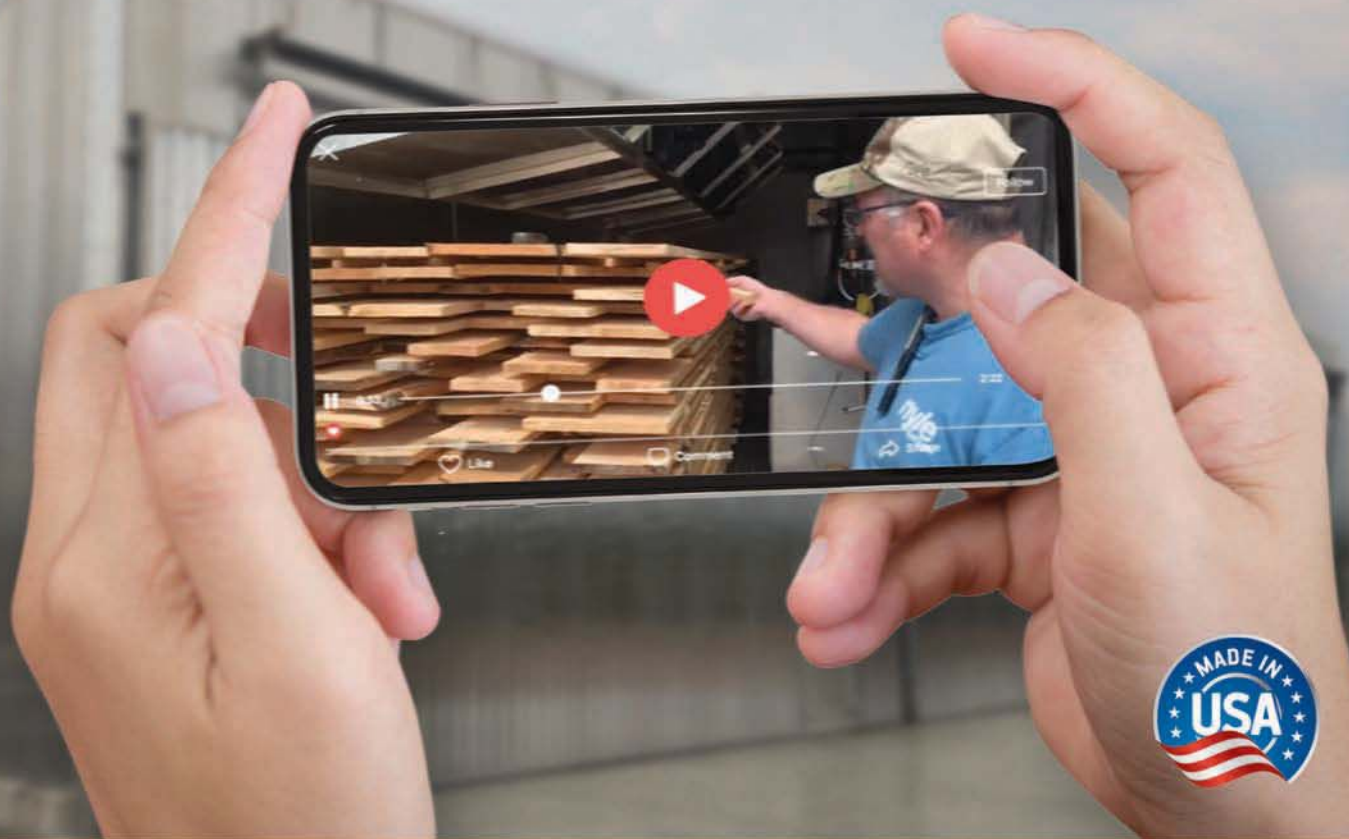
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