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Hardwood

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SEPTEMBER 2021

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SEPTEMBER 2021

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About The Cover

Granite Valley Forest Products

Granite Valley Forest Products is obsessed with every step and every detail between the forest and the customer's loading dock. "A lot of things need to go exactly right every time for a load of hardwood to be properly harvested, dried, warehoused, and shipped," said Gus Welter, owner of Granite Valley. "If even one thing is off—if someone gets a little

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Founded in 1927 by: O.L. Miller – 1894-1963

Publisher: Paul J. Miller – 1963-2010

- Forest Products Export Directory • Imported Wood Purchasing Guide
- Import/Export Wood Purchasing News • Hardwood Purchasing Handbook
- Green Books's Hardwood Marketing Directory
- Green Books's Softwood Marketing Directory
- The Softwood Forest Products Buyer

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ADVERTISING: tammy@millerwoodtradepub.com

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SUBSCRIPTIONS: circ@millerwoodtradepub.com

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENTS:

Chicago, Los Angeles, High Point, Grand Rapids, Portland, Toronto
 Controlled circulation postage paid at Memphis, TN
 (USPS #917-760)

The NATIONAL HARDWOOD MAGAZINE (ISSN 0194-0910) is published monthly, except for two issues in December, for \$55.00 per year and \$65.00 (U.S. dollars) per year for Canada by National Hardwood Magazine, Inc., 5175 Elmore Rd., Suite 23, Memphis, TN 38134. Periodicals Postage paid at Memphis, TN, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to National Hardwood Magazine, P.O. Box 34908, Memphis, TN 38184.

Publications mail agreement No. 40739074.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:

P.O. Box 503, RPO W. Beaver Cre., Rich-Hill, ON L4B 4R6.

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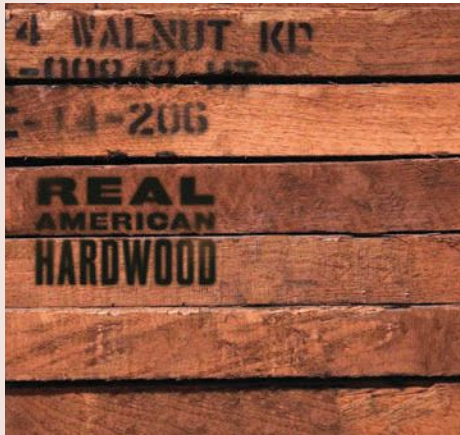
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Where We Are

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Where We're Going, Together

The next steps will have the largest impact on the industry and require buy-in from all industry stakeholders. The Coalition is preparing to launch a comprehensive promotion campaign—including a consumer-oriented website, in-store promotion at top big box stores, a broad media relations campaign, social media influencer partnerships, print and web advertising, and much more.



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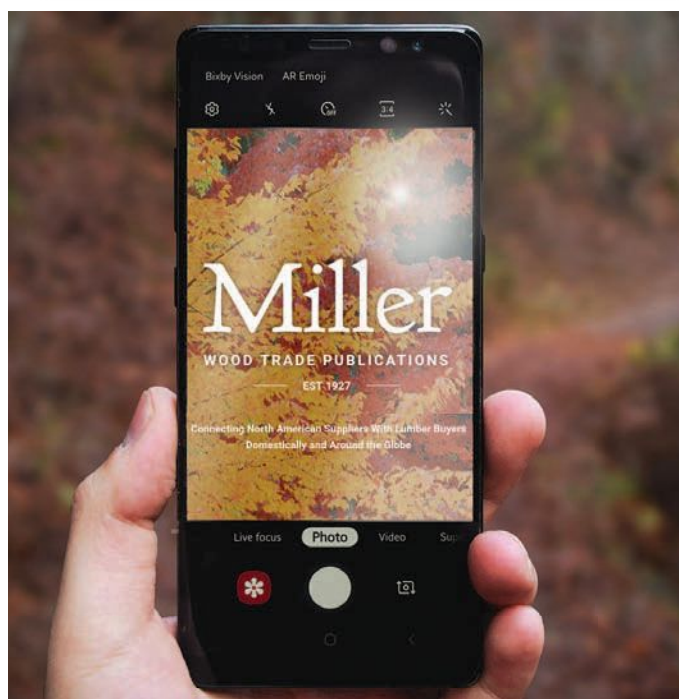
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HARDWOOD CALENDAR

September

Penn-York Lumbermen's Club, Meeting, Host: Walker Lumber and Forcey Lumber in conjunction with Pennsylvania Forest Products Assoc., State College, PA. www.pennysouth.org. Sept. 13

National Hardwood Lumber Association, Annual Convention, Palm Beach County Convention Center, West Palm Beach, FL. www.nhla.com. Sept. 22-24. ■



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LAKE STATES

Up in the Lake States, the markets continue to be solid.

A Michigan sawmiller said his market is “still good. It’s not quite as hectic, but it’s still really strong. The market is more stable than it was four months ago.”

He manufactures Hard and Soft Maple, Red and White Oak, Walnut, Hickory, Cherry, Poplar and Basswood. Best sellers, he observed, are White Oak, Hard Maple and Walnut. Thicknesses are 4/4 through 8/4 with some 10/4 and 12/4. Grades are No. 3 and Better.

He sells this lumber to distribution yards (50 percent) and end users (50 percent). He said his customers are busy.

In Illinois, a sawmill representative rated his market as “really good.” It’s better, he stated, than it was several months ago. “It was good then,” he said. “It’s robust now.”

He sells Red and White Oak, Hickory, Walnut, Poplar and Cottonwood. Selling best are White Oak, Hickory and Poplar. Thicknesses range from 4/4 to 8/4. He sells this lumber mostly to distribution yards. “It seems like their business is good,” he noted. “If they can get the lumber, they can sell it. Their main problem is labor shortage. We are a family business, so that’s not a problem for us.” Transportation isn’t a problem for him either, he observed. “We have our own trucks. But from what I hear, transportation is a problem for a lot of companies.”

A Wisconsin lumber provider reported that his business is “very good. I’d say it’s better than a few months ago. The prices are better. Demand was strong six months ago and is strong now.”

His products include Red and White Oak, Hard and Soft Maple, Cherry, Hickory and Basswood in all grades, mostly 4/4 with some 5/4.

NORTHEAST

The Hardwood lumber market in the Northeast remains strong.

A Pennsylvania lumber provider said, “The market’s good. It’s better than it was a few months ago. At this time, we are heavier in the domestic market.”

He handles Hard and Soft Maple, Red Oak, Cherry, Poplar, Ash and Hickory. Selling best are Hard and Soft Maple and Poplar. Thicknesses extend from 4/4 to 8/4.

He sells to distribution yards and end use manufacturers. His customers’ sales are good, he noted.

“Transportation has been exceptionally difficult,” he stated. “We’re getting it done; we just have to wait longer to get the product out the door. We’re not backlogged. We’re continuing to keep product moving.”

In New York, a wholesale lumberman judged his market to be “pretty good. It’s backed off, but we’re still selling all our lumber. Things aren’t quite as robust as they were, but if you go out and look for orders, you can get them.” This market, he stated, is better than it was several months earlier.

He handles Red and White Oak, Hard Maple and Cherry in FAS and Better and No. 1 Common. His best seller is Hard Maple. Thicknesses are from 4/4 to 8/4.

He sells his lumber to distribution yards and end users. Asked about his customers’ level of business, he said, “It’s going well.”

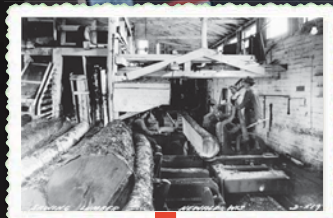
His experience with transportation is not the norm. “We probably pay too much, but we have a good group of truckers that take care of our needs,” he noted. “However, it is a problem getting containers for flatbed trucks.”

A sawmiller in Connecticut assessed his market as “pretty good. Everything seems to be moving. There doesn’t seem to be any real weak points in anything we’re producing.”

Asked if his market was better or worse than six

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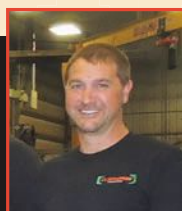
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SOUTHEAST

Lumber providers in the Southeast are optimistic, based on what they have seen in the marketplace.

An Arkansas flooring manufacturer stated, “My business is strong. It’s the best it’s ever been. This trend started in June of 2020.”

His business is better than it was several months ago, he judged.

He processes Red and White Oak and Hickory, with Red and White Oak being his best sellers in flooring. His customers, who are distributors, report business is “very strong with heavy demand and lack of supply.”

The downside of all this is that it’s “hard to hire people,” he said.

In Mississippi, a lumberman said that the previous six months had been “really good. We’re optimistic our business is going to maintain its levels. I don’t think it’s going to be what it was the past six months. But it’s going to be fine. I know one thing I’m seeing,” he added. “Some mills that were cutting pine are going back to Hardwood.”

He sells mostly Oak and Poplar in all grades, from pallet stock to FAS. This lumber is sold to end users who produce flooring, crating and pallets. “Most of our sales are for flooring,” the lumberman stated.

His customers’ sales have been “exceptional,” he said.

Asked if transportation had been a problem, he replied, “It has been. However, freight seems to be loosening up a little bit, with more trucks available. So, there’s a little hope for us there that the freight rates are going to come down a little bit. I think it’s headed in the right direction.”

A Georgia lumber supplier stated, “For the most part, our market is good. Poplar is still hanging in there pretty well. The green Red Oak is doing really well. I’m not sure what’s going to happen with FAS and Better. No. 1 Common is a little shaky but it’s still moving. No. 2 Common

WEST COAST

Ask several lumbermen on the West Coast about how their market is and, to a man, they mention the tight supply of lumber.

In California, a lumber provider said, “The market’s still strong. You just have to have lumber to supply it. The lumber will be coming after you order it, but it’s not any faster than it was about six months ago. It’s still about the same pace.”

The lumber he sells comes in Uppers in No. 1 Common and No. 2 Common in Walnut, White Oak and Hickory. “White Oak and Walnut are the best sellers,” he stated.

He sells to flooring companies and retail stores. “They’re saying their business is strong,” he reported.

Asked about transportation, he replied, “It’s still Ok, no complaints. It’s just harder to get containers shipped on time here from the Midwest or the East Coast. Other than that, it’s not a problem out here getting trucks.”

To the north, in Washington, a lumberman stated, “Availability is still pretty tight. We’re still struggling to find odds and ends. Whitewood is tough to get; even Poplar is in pretty thin supply. I haven’t seen a lot of activity in Red Oak.”

He said that, although the market is good now, availability of lumber was better six months earlier.

He sells mostly upper grades in Poplar, Hard and Soft Maple, White Soft Maple and White Oak (which he said may be cooling off in sales volume). His customers are distribution yards and end users. “Everybody’s doing well in their sales,” he remarked. “They’re as good as their production. It’s the same old story; labor is a problem across the board. There’s not enough people to work in the factories or mills, so that’s slowing things down.”

Transportation, he observed, is “a little bit better. I think the transportation prices have eased slightly. For the last

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CANADIAN TRENDS

News from suppliers about prices, trends, sales and inventories

ONTARIO

As COVID-19 restrictions ease across the province, the forestry sector is optimistic business will improve through the fall. The continued vaccination efforts, the reduction of reported cases, and the recent Canada border reopening announcement are all positive factors. Sawmills report decent volumes of logs over the summer. For some, however, green lumber production had not increased significantly due to the shortage of labor. Demand for Hardwood products continues to be strong, and so there was a push to build up inventories heading into early fall. Demand is consuming production of developing grades as well as for that of industrial products. Domestic and international markets are performing well, and keeping kiln-dried inventories thin.

With forest fires at a high, additional restrictions were imposed on July 21st and are under the authority of an emergency order in place for Northwestern Ontario. The announcement added activities in the mining, rail, construction and transportation industries that have the potential to cause sparks and ignite fires. Forest industry bans include blasting related to road work, the use of mechanized power equipment and power saws for harvesting or processing wood, and all hot work such as welding, torching and grinding. These restrictions will remain in place until further notice.

According to statistics, U.S. Ash exports to China fell 24 percent in the first five months of 2021 compared to the same period in 2020. Contacts commented that they have not improved. Domestic markets are performing well and supplies are low. Prices for certain grades had risen slightly, and wholesalers and secondary manufacturers were looking to boost green lumber inventories.

Basswood supplies are low relative to demand, commented contacts. However, in the Appalachian region production has picked up and thus more available to

QUEBEC

With the construction break in Quebec, there was the usual slow-down in activity. Businesses were working hard to obtain the supplies they needed, as well as find skilled workers, as is the case for most businesses. With easing COVID-19 restrictions, companies are focusing efforts on finding logs or lumber they need to move forward as the economy continues to recover. Sawmills say they have better log inventories now, and production is gaining traction, although labor shortages and transportation issues are a challenge. Most markets are doing well and absorbing developing production. Sawmills, wholesalers and end users are seeing higher fulfillment rates on their purchase orders. Some state they are buying certain items less as their inventories are mostly in good shape. Flooring and cabinet manufacturers are seeking more materials.

Contracts report that Canadian, U.S. and Mexican Red Oak markets are performing well. China is still being the greater buyer of steady volumes for this species. Kiln-dried inventories are thin for most grades and thicknesses, thus price has risen. Green Red Oak production has improved over the summer, even though work was to keep whitewood log decks supplied. Supply is marginally adequate to satisfy buyers' needs.

White Oak demand for green and kiln-dried products is not being met. It is hard to find sufficient volumes of White Oak saw logs, and green lumber output is limited, noted contacts.

Ash is reportedly doing well on domestic markets, sellers report steady business to end users and wholesalers. Export sales to secondary manufacturers are also good, but sluggish to China. Ash production was increasing along with many other species as we moved through the summer, but supplies were still tight for some items.

Basswood demand from established customers is

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NEWS DEVELOPMENTS

LINEAGE IS INTRODUCED AS AFFORDABLE, AMERICAN-MADE FURNITURE

Chris Pelcher, former executive vice president, general manager and chief merchandising officer for Art Van, Wolf

and Levin Furniture, recently debuted his new case-goods line, Lineage Furniture.

This new furniture line uses solid U.S. Hardwoods and is manufactured only in the United States (in Vermont and Ohio). When he was preparing for the August launch for

the manufacturing of this furniture, he contacted more than 50 of the top 100 furniture retailers. "The response has been incredible," he stated.

Lineage will launch with eight domestically made, all-wood master bedroom collections. The bedrooms are crafted from American Appalachian Hardwoods like Maple, Oak and Cherry. Solid wood Queen beds will start at under \$599 (cost). Queen bed, dresser and mirror packages start at under \$1,499 (cost).

"The goal was to position the line at or near landed pricing for higher end Vietnamese or Indonesian bedrooms and well under other U.S.-made goods," Pelcher observed. "The big advantage with Lineage is it's made in the USA, and we have production availability for the quantities retailers need now."

Of the eight new collections, five groups will come out of Lineage's Northeast production facility and three will come out of its Midwest factory.

The Northeast goods will feature 66-inch by 40-inch dressers, 56 to 60-inch-high headboards, contrasted English dovetail drawer boxes and a proprietary new mattress support system.

The products coming from the Midwest will be in the Lineage *ELITE* program. These products are all hand-built by Amish and Mennonite craftsman. They will have a selection of best-selling special-order colors available.



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HIGH LEVEL OF HOME IMPROVEMENTS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE

Annual gains in homeowner improvement and maintenance spending are set to accelerate in the second half of the year and remain elevated through mid-year 2022, according to the Leading Indicator of Remodeling Activity (LIRA) released recently by the Remodeling Futures Program at the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University. The LIRA projects annual growth in home renovation and repair expenditures will reach 8.6 percent by the second quarter of next year.

"Home remodeling will likely grow at a faster pace given the ongoing strength of home sales, house price appreciation, and new residential construction activity," says Chris Herbert, Managing Director of the Joint Center for Housing Studies. "A significant rise in permits for home improvements also indicates that owners are continuing to invest in bigger discretionary and replacement projects."

"Larger gains in retail sales of building materials suggest the remodeling market continues to be lifted by DIY activity as well," said Abbe Will, Associate Project Director in the Remodeling Futures Program at the Center. "By the middle of next year, annual remodeling expenditures to owner-occupied homes are expected to surpass \$380 billion."

A year after the unprecedented changes to the U.S. economy brought

on by the pandemic, many economic indicators are showing extreme percent changes from pandemic-induced lows. To reduce the immense growth rate volatility generated by these year-over-year comparisons, the projection

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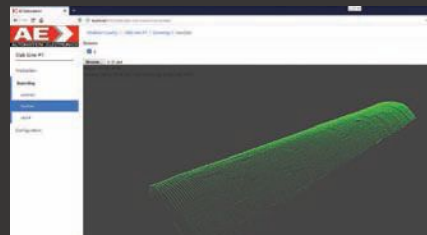
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IT'S ALL ABOUT NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION

If COVID-19 has taught us anything, it has certainly taught us how to be flexible. Willing or not, we adapted to the circumstances and conditions surrounding us. Now, as we inch closer and closer to a version of 'life the way it used to be,' it is my personal hope that I am able to maintain my recently 'honed' personality trait. Because according to those near and dear to me, flexibility has not been one of my strong suits. Until now, that is!

Yet, in some cases and with certain activities, the 'old way' of doing things is not necessarily all bad. And so, if pandemic cautions continue to get farther and farther in our rear-view mirror, HMA is planning a return to 'life the way it used to be' regarding an in-person, face-to-face, bring along your hard hat, fall Regional Meeting! Yes, our members have been clamoring for the return of their favorite networking event, and I agree. Long overdue is an HMA Regional Meeting conducted the way it used to be!

Now, if you are new to the Hardwood industry and/or unfamiliar with the HMA, here's a snapshot of what these 36-hour, members only, networking confabs entail.

- By touring sawmills, concentration yards and secondary manufacturing facilities, HMA members get to see the latest technology at work and witness working solutions to common challenges and problems.
- Plus, during bus rides to the tour sites and throughout evening receptions and dinners, participants exchange information with their seasoned counterparts; then participate in discussions on industry issues, forest



resource topics, or Hardwood market updates.

- Typically conducted in the spring and fall of each year, these educational and peer-to-peer networking events are designed to deliver maximum value in minimal time. And for my 20+ years with the Association, an absolute 'favorite' activity with our membership!

So stand by. If all continues as planned, Meeting date/location details will soon be announced. Should pandemic concerns again rear their ugly heads, HMA will switch into flexibility-mode, and devise a Plan B approach.

One additional item before closing ...

Many of you are familiar with **The American Hardwoods Collection** - a sample kit of 20 of the most abundant Hardwood species, produced by the HMA's American Hardwood Information Center, www.HardwoodInfo.com, and distributed to students, architects, designers, and industry stakeholders and



associates. Well, I'm pleased to report that there is still diverse interest in this excellent tool.

A recent phone inquiry from a forester in the North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services Forest Service resulted in a dozen sample kits being shipped to the Forest Service in Raleigh. And this is what the forester told us.

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BY LINDA JOVANOVICH,
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,
HARDWOOD MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION,
PITTSBURGH, PA
412-244-0440
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A truck loaded with logs is driving away on a two-lane road that curves into the distance. The road is flanked by dense evergreen forests. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, suggesting sunset or sunrise. The truck is a flatbed, and the logs are stacked high, filling the back of the truck.

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WHEN THE BEST AND THE WORST CONVERGE...

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." wrote Charles Dickens in *A Tale of Two Cities*, in 1859. That great book was written in the backdrop of the French Revolution, an especially turbulent time in history when dynamically opposing forces in politics, religion and economics converged.

That time has significant similarities with our time now culturally, but also similarities in world economies and drilling down, similarities in our Hardwood lumber economy and especially in exports.

We have had countless conversations with our peers, customers, vendors, and transportation service providers who summarize that demand is high and supply is constrained. Nothing new to most of you. I will leave it to those smarter than me (there are many) to prognosticate further about prices, but you would have to have been "Cast Away" on an island not to experience firsthand the dramatic change in consumer appetite, worldwide. There has been a sea change in consumer purchase patterns away from "service" or "experiences" to durable goods. It is not unreasonable to attribute that to the affects of the COVID pandemic. Personal priorities have shifted, and for durable goods manufacturers including Hardwoods, that is a good thing. As an old-timer once said, THESE ARE the good ole days!

One of my friends mentioned that we are in a "post war economy." Another suggested there is nothing like this since the American Industrial Revolution of the 1880-1910 era, when as a matter of fact, there were more millionaires per capita in Williamsport, PA, than anywhere else in the world, due to booming wood products de-



mand. We will not all become millionaires of course but suffice it to say our industry is riding a tidal wave.

One of the consequences of worldwide consumer demand for durable goods is logistics, shipping. I have had the pleasure to talk off the record with a notable shipping executive. Here are some key points. The shipping lines Exec's comments in quotations:

- There are no known seaworthy shipping vessels not in use. It takes years to build a new vessel, so ocean shipping is at full capacity (nobody knows for sure but there is probably upwards of 20 percent more cargo tonnage on the water now than in any time in human history).
- U.S. import volume is up 70 percent from last year, and container prices for imports are at "auction" prices. Today's price is \$15,000 per Ctr from Asia to U.S./EU.
- U.S. export volume (all goods) is down 14 percent because shipping lines are returning empty containers to Asia. Empty containers are more valuable in Asia than the "back haul" is worth.
- "It's not only U.S. and EU destinations in demand (although they are leading), even India and other emerging markets volumes are either stable or higher, even now during pandemic shutdowns."
- COVID has and still is upsetting port's ability to quickly unload and reload vessels, around the world. Congestion at all the main seaports is a current crisis that will continue into next year at least. "Even if a magic wand solved today's crisis overnight, tomorrow's freight volume would overwhelm the system again."
- "Rail, trucking, port labor pool, and a lack of enough

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BY DAVE WHITTEN,
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WCMA/WMMA 2021 FALL CONFERENCE AND PLANT TOUR EVENT

The Wood Component Manufacturers Association (WCMA) is joining forces with the Wood Machinery Manufacturers of America (WMMA) to hold a joint Fall Conference & Plant Tour Event. The event will be held in Louisville, KY, from Tuesday, October 12 through Thursday, October 14. I know as owners and managers of manufacturing facilities, it is sometimes hard to take the time for your own growth and professional development, but let me assure you, this event is a must attend! We can't wait to see you in person!

The event will give attendees the opportunity to meet with colleagues, tour unique and successful manufacturing plants, and attend educational sessions. We will be touring Fischer SIPS, the Louisville Slugger Museum, Koetter Woodworking, Anderson Wood Products, and Brown Forman. At each plant, attendees will see first-hand how companies are managing various aspects of manufacturing, including optimization and scanning, materials handling, lean manufacturing, tooling, and machining. One of the most valuable parts of these tours is seeing different methods of manufacturing and observing what other companies are doing successfully. In addition, there will be plenty of opportunities to network, one of the biggest benefits of attending.

The event will be held at the Omni Louisville Hotel. Located in downtown Louisville, you will have easy access to Main Street and be able to indulge in Louisville's bourbon culture at many popular distilleries. We have reserved a block of rooms for attendees, and you will want to reserve your room by September 24.



Non-members are encouraged to attend to see what the WCMA is all about. Any company that qualifies for membership may attend the event at a higher registration rate. If you decide to become a member within 60 days of the event, the WCMA will refund the difference in registration cost and will discount your 2022 Annual Dues by 50%. We are proud of our new efforts and want to share our progress with potential members. We

are sure that after participating in these excellent networking opportunities you will be excited to join.

If you are a manufacturer of wood components or dimension, and not a current member of the WCMA, now is a great time to join. The WCMA is committed to becoming a progressive, nationally recognized association, whose focus is meeting the needs of its members. Membership provides access to a wide range of industry experts, and your colleagues are often your best source for in-depth insight and ideas. Our members share openly, freely, and with great enthusiasm, and know that success of individual businesses translates to success of the industry as a whole. To read more about the benefits and join today, just visit our website at www.wcma.com.

If you have not yet registered for the 2021 Fall Conference and Plant Tour Event, please visit our website at www.wcma.com or call the office at 651-332-6332 or wcma@wcma.com. Louisville is a great city, and we encourage you to spend an extra day or two to visit the area. We look forward to seeing you in October! ■

BY AMY K. SNELL, CAE,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
WOOD COMPONENT MANUFACTURERS ASSOC.,
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THE ROLE OF EDUCATION AND TRADE ASSOCIATIONS

The National Hardwood Lumber Association created the Hardwood Lumber Grading Rules more than 120 years ago. Since that time, NHLA has been the educator of those ever-changing Rules and the promoter of industry knowledge. With the onset of COVID last March, the usual in-person delivery method of education got disrupted, leaving all of us scratching our heads a bit.

In May of 2020, NHLA hosted its first webinar series on the process of Kiln Drying Hardwood Lumber. The 4-part series featured Dr. Eugene Wengert, aka the Wood Doctor, and had more than 348 registered attendees. NHLA has never had 348 attendees outside of the Annual Convention. We were thrilled beyond belief at the educational outreach we were able to obtain. From May to September of 2020, NHLA hosted a dozen more webinars all FREE, and all with amazing attendance. In September, the entire NHLA Annual Convention was held via a virtual platform with a strong turnout.

As society and the Hardwood industry began returning to “normal,” we wondered if the lure of the webinar would lose its appeal. Would people want to have in-person education? Had they grown tired of virtual life? In 2021, as of the writing of this article, NHLA has scheduled more virtual education and has completed one webinar, which almost 100 industry professionals attended.

Associations can play a major role in employee train-



ing. We have access to employers, who are looking for skilled labor that doesn't necessarily require a secondary degree; we have experience with certification programs; and we know that our programs need to accommodate people who are working full time and have other responsibilities. We can also play a major role in educating those who may not yet be em-

ployed within the industry.

The offering of webinars may have been prompted by necessity but is here to stay by design. Virtual education will not replace our in-person classes but enhance the calendar of offerings for everyone and may lead to new and expanded in-person education.

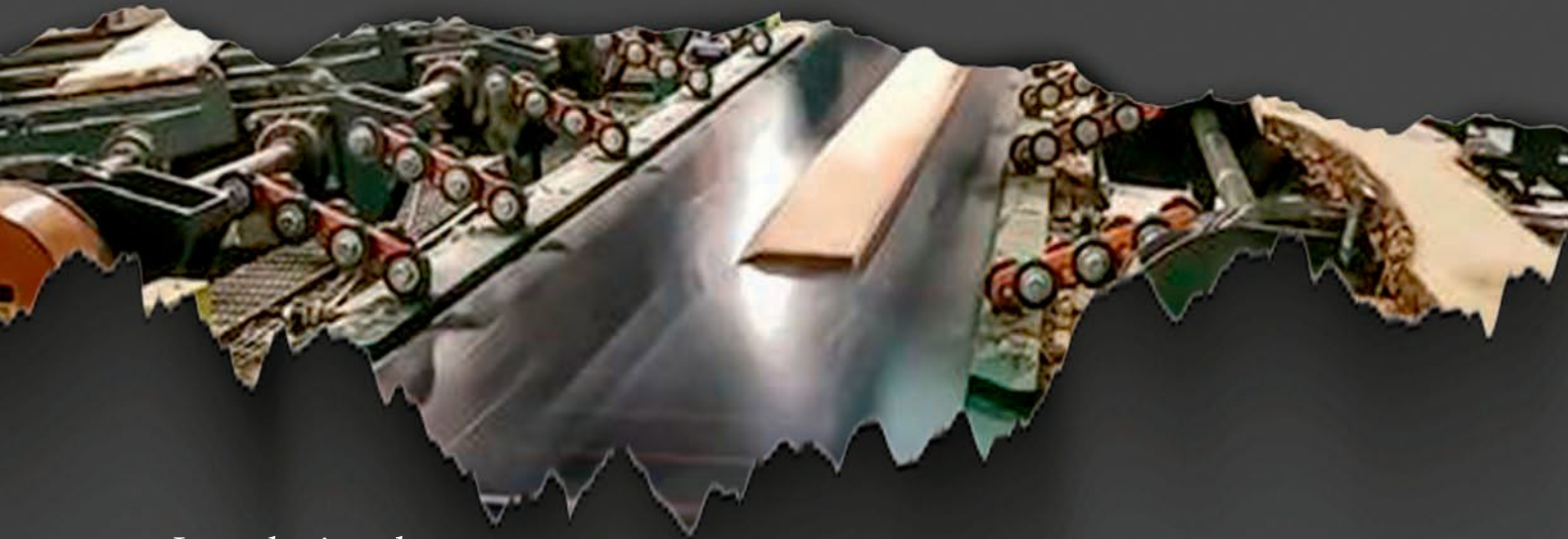
NHLA is always looking for ways to provide the industry with education. Education for individual advancement but also for the betterment of the company. We can help people get a job, keep a job, and get a better job. Check-out our calendar offerings for in-person and virtual education at nhla.com. If you have a suggestion for a Hardwood industry related class, please let us know by sending an email to info@nhla.com. ■

**All past webinars are available for replay through the NHLA Online Store and are free for NHLA members.*

BY RENEE HORNSBY,
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“We are hand-making something special for a person’s home. People put very few things in their house that will last the life of the house. The flooring and millwork is one of them.”

– Gerry Lashway, president and owner
Ponders Hollow Custom Wood Flooring & Millwork



Ponders Hollow

Custom Wood Flooring & Millwork: Sharp Eyes And A Steady Hand

By Deborah Wilbrink



ABOVE: Custom painted Poplar mouldings and trim add elegance to a home.

LEFT: Here is an example of wide-plank Red Pine flooring.

Westfield, MA—Ponders Hollow Custom Wood Flooring & Millwork, headquartered here, takes a hands-on approach to manufacturing. Ponders Hollow specializes in plank flooring, which is 50 percent of the business, including solid, engineered, and pre-finished. The other 50 percent is custom architectural moulding, with over 5,000 profiles.

President and Owner Gerry Lashway purchases 1.7 million board feet annually from mills, distributors and wholesalers. The majority of the wood is Poplar in 4/4-8/4 random lengths, Select and Better, for millwork, crowns, baseboards and casings. These are custom-run to individual orders. Birch, Cherry and Maple are also used for the millwork. Most of the Ponders Hollow mouldings are of pre-primed Poplar, ready for the final coat of paint. Lashway stated, "We're running all different components for a house that's full of painted trim, from small bin mouldings to wide baseboards to multiple-cut crowns. We buy different thicknesses and lengths. As the order comes in, that's how we buy the lumber."

The wide plank Hardwood flooring requires Rift, Quartered, and Live-Sawn White Oak, Hickory in different grades, Walnut in clear, select grades, Red Oak and Ash. Lashway reported, "Over the years, we've done a good job here of having a range of suppliers who will work with us and get what we need. Like other companies, we struggle to find the increasingly desirable White Oak in Rift and Quartered."

Ponders Hollow also makes softwood flooring, with 200,000 board feet to be purchased in the coming year. Eastern White Pine from the Massachusetts area, Long-leaf heart pine from the South, and Canadian red pine make these beautiful floors. Lashway prizes pine for its possibilities. "You can really see the beauty of how a tree grows when you have these wide, long boards. To be able to have an open floor plan with 16-foot long, 12-14-inch-wide pine going through it makes a gorgeous floor," he enthused.

The Lashway Lumber sawmill, where Lashway and



An employee moves a cart of freshly milled wide-plank live-sawn White Oak flooring.

his brother Larry were the fourth generation to learn the wood trade, provides a small percentage of the lumber used by Ponders Hollow. Their father, Gerald Lashway, noticed impending change in the lumber industry and planned an additional business, Ponders Hollow Custom Moulding & Flooring, Inc. Gerry Lashway remembers, "I was with it from the beginning. We began building in 2004. By the end of the summer in 2005, we were running machines." The company recently purchased a Friulmac End Matcher for squaring and end matching tongue-and-groove wide plank floors, significantly improving the wider choices.

Gerry Lashway's degree in forestry shows in his love of wood and his desire to put hand-crafting into every item off the floor. He said, "We are hand-making something special for a person's home. People put very few things in their house that will last the life of the house. The flooring and millwork is one of them. It's really important for our team to know that. Whether you're a homeowner or you rent, you replace your appliances, furniture, tables and light fixtures. Not too often do people tear up the

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This wide-plank light character White Oak flooring includes light whitewash and finish by the customer.



(From left) Thomas Rhodes, John Treat, Molly Moore, Seth Moore and Raymond Hamilton at R&M Wood Inc.

Wood Runs In The Blood At R&M Wood Inc.

By Michelle Keller

“This company was built on the shoulders of a hardworking and determined man, and we will continue to make his name and company known as nothing short of excellence in the Hardwood industry.”

*—Molly Moore,
operations manager and kiln operator,
R&M Wood Inc.*

Harrison, AR—R&M Wood Inc., based here, is a Hardwood lumber distributor that specializes in Red and White Oak. The company also carries Hickory, Ash, Cherry, cedar (4/4, 5/4); and Soft Maple (4/4 through 10/4, No. 1 Common & Btr). Additionally, R&M Wood, which has evolved from a concentration yard selling truckloads to large manufacturers, now is a distributor of lumber that also sells LTL's to smaller manufacturers, such as cabinet and millwork companies.

Purchasing 2.5 million board feet annually, R&M Wood Inc. was bought from TM Wood Products in 2016. Marty Wood, the owner and founder, began his business of specializing in quality Hardwoods at his concentration yard in Northwest Arkansas in 2014. What once was a small shed with a few men stacking lumber on sticks, and only 500,000 board feet of inventory on the yard is now roughly 20,000 square feet of dry storage, 15 employees that manually process green and kiln-dried inventory daily, and 1.2 million board feet on an air-dry yard.

When Wood is the family name, a business in the forest products industry is almost obligatory. This particular Wood line of

family has been making a name for themselves in the lumber industry since the 1960's when Fred Wood was featured in an Arkansas magazine article for his innovations of sawmilling over his 26 years being in the business. Many years later, after serving in the Air Force, Marty's father, Buddy Wood took interest in sawmill engineering, which led the Wood family back to Arkansas and sparked Marty's love and interest for the lumber business. Marty began his experiences by quickly working his way towards becoming an inspector at Pickens Lumber Company. He attended the National Hardwood Lumber Association (NHLA) Inspection school with the 71st class. After several years of inspecting lumber for various operations throughout the south, he was offered a promotion to wholesale lumber, which he excelled at enough to build a clientele to achieve his dreams of owning his own business.

In the start of the recession in 2007, TM Wood Products was founded and even with a rocky start he profited enough to once again fulfill a dream of owning and operating his own distribution yard. Marty worked tirelessly to build a crew that would eventually manually process 20,000 to 30,000 board feet of quality Hardwood lumber daily. Now his efforts and interests are a legacy for his daughter, Molly Moore, as she begins to take over responsibilities, such as operating the dry kilns and managing operations at their concentration yard in Harrison, AR. Thomas Rhodes and Seth Moore are the remainders of the original TM Wood Products' team and both men have taken on new roles, such as sales and purchasing.

Molly and Seth fully intend on keeping Marty's reputation of quality and loyalty in this industry by adding to her dry kiln operation and maintaining an efficient crew. "We dry 300,000 board feet of lumber monthly and have the capability to customize orders by double end trimming and/or surfacing any kiln-dried loads,"

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Aerial view of R&M Wood Inc.'s facility in Harrison, AR.



Marty Wood (owner, R&M Wood) stands in front of the company's double end trimmed 5/4 FAS White Oak, ready for shipment. R&M buys 2.5 million board feet of lumber annually.



Double-end trimmed 5/4 FAS White Oak with the company logo stands ready for shipment.



At SII Dry Kilns are, from left, Ben Mathews, vice president of engineering and production; Brian Turlington, vice president of sales; Dan Mathews, president; and Mary Mathews, inside sales / parts manager.

SII Dry Kilns Celebrates Over 50 Years In The Lumber Industry

Lexington, NC—SII's equipment can be seen producing high quality products for hundreds of lumber companies throughout America. While being a staple in the lumber industry, SII, headquartered here, has also cultivated hard-working principles that set them apart from all other kiln companies, according to a company spokesman. Since 1969, the company has remained a family owned and operated business by the Mathews and Turlington families. "We manufacture all of our products 'in-house,' which allows us better oversight of the fabrication process, and most field installation is done by our crews, who have decades of experience building drying equipment. We own it from beginning to end," stated Brian Turlington, vice president. In addition to that, SII is versatile in the kinds of kilns they install, from conventional package-loaded and "SII-Design"-center-fan-wall Hardwood kilns to Dual Path Continuous, or DPK's, and double or single

track-loaded softwood kilns.

SII offers various alternatives to air drying lumber with fan sheds and multi-zoned pre-dryers for the Hardwood industry. "These products allow our customers to maximize their kiln throughput by minimizing the amount of kiln-time required to dry and condition the lumber," stated Ben Mathews, also a vice president. SII provides complete kiln rehab and rebuild services including roofs and wall panels, doors, heating systems, fan decks and structural replacements. SII builds kilns as small as 10,000 board feet up to 250,000 board feet. Their kilns are tailored to the specific needs of the client.

President Dan Mathews recalled, "The company was started in 1969 by my father, Paul Mathews, and his partner, Jim Morgan. Dad handled the sales, and Jim was the hands-on expert. The company was strictly an installation company," Dan Mathews continued. "My father sold for other manufacturers of kilns. Some of

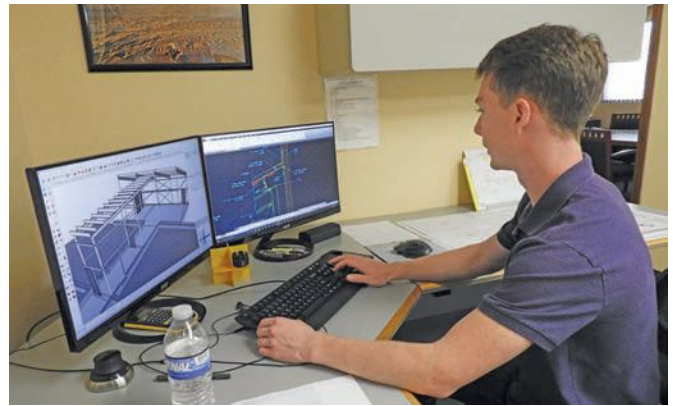
those manufacturers didn't want to install the kilns, and that opened the door for a kiln installation company. That's how the company really began," Dan said, "and that's where the name came from – Southeastern Installation Incorporated (SII)."

In the late 1970s, Paul's son Tom Mathews came to work for SII, and, according to Dan, "He is the one that pushed for more manufacturing. So, that's how we really got going into the manufacturing end of it." In the late 1980s, the company began doing business as SII Dry Kilns.

The first kilns built by SII were furniture-style kilns made with masonry walls with steel trusses overhead, Dan stated. "As SII began to grow and we did more installations and more manufacturing of components, it became more apparent that prefabricated construction of kilns with corrosion resistant materials was the future rather than staying with masonry kilns." That's the point at which Dan became involved with SII. He



SII's spacious welding shop is where fabrication of dry kilns is accomplished.



SII owns the process of providing dry kilns to customers: from engineering, shown here, to installation to providing parts after the installation.

left his architectural firm and came on board full-time, joining his father and brother, on Jan. 1, 1990. The next year, Paula Turlington, Dan's sister, joined the company and worked closely with Paul in sales. She later became the vice president of sales for the company. With Paul's wife, Dorothy Mathews, working in and out of the office, SII had developed into a complete family operation.

"We evolved through the 1990s, doing more and more manufacturing of the complete facility for the drying operation, whether that happened to be in kilns, pre-dryers, fan sheds or other types of equipment. That's how we grew into more of a manufacturing company, rather than just installing or refurbishing of other manufacturers' equipment," Dan recalled.

In 1995, Tom Mathews, died of cancer. Also, in 1995, Brian Turlington came to work for SII. In 2002,

"We are definitely not cookie-cutter, and we are not boxed into certain types of designs. Everyone knows they get that backstage access to any of us – after the sale, and I think that is exceptional."

*– Ben Mathews,
vice president of operations,
SII Dry Kilns*

Ben Mathews came on board. Mary Mathews came to work for her family's company in 2012.

Today, Dan Mathews is President of SII, Ben Mathews is Vice-President of Operations, Brian Turlington is Vice-President of Sales and Mary Mathews oversees the inside sales/parts division. In sales, Ken Mathews services the Southeast and South Central, Jim Higgins works

in the Midwest and Lake States and Bob Pope covers Pennsylvania to New England. The organization employs more than 60 people.

In the parts division, "We not only inventory over \$200,000 of kiln components from valves to actuators, controllers, motors and fan blades for immediate shipment, but also we have lots of vendors that we have great relationships with,"

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SII is going to make sure that they get the part to the customers as fast as possible to avoid downtime.



Y&Y Hardwoods in Thomasville, NC has four Package Kilns.



This grouping of past presidents underscores the lifetime investment that is common among IHLA's top volunteers. Service to their association and industry runs throughout careers and even generations.

IHLA Thrives With People, Partnerships, And A Little Bit Of Luck



**By Ray Moistner,
Executive Director, IHLA**

The Indiana Hardwood Lumbermen's Association (IHLA) is a 123-year-old trade association that is more relevant and effective today than at any time in its history. But, before I share the secrets of IHLA's success, I don't think you're going to buy in unless you first accept an important history lesson.

Let's flash back 50 years or so, to around 1970. If I had told you then that companies like RCA, IBM, Sears and Roebuck, Eastman Kodak and Mobil Oil would be afterthoughts in half a century, you would certainly have written me off as a radical or a fool. But today, those corporate giants are Amazon, Walmart, Apple, CVS and Starbucks, and I think it's safe to say that in another 25 years the list will be full of new names again.

The simple point is that evolution and re-invention are the keys to survival, and for trade associations it's even more important to adapt your services to the ever-evolving needs of your members and the environment in which they do business.

Yes, it is very true that the Hardwood industry still con-

siders itself an "old-fashioned" industry – one in which a handshake is a bond and face-to-face interactions, personal relationships and networking are essential. But that, too, is changing before our eyes, and associations had better produce results and return on investment as our membership grows globally, consolidates, and learns to use electronics to work more efficiently. Labor shortages and adapting to the pandemic have accelerated this transition.

IHLA, once an Indiana-only group, now has members in 34 states, four Canadian provinces, and a few other countries. I attribute our success to three main areas:

1. We realized almost 20 years ago that we were going to have to be seen as an economic engine rather than a consumer of natural resources if we were going to truly overcome the activism and have a chance to tell our story about our products' environmental benefits.
2. The multi-generational foundation of our membership contributed to a tremendous sense of loyalty and volunteerism within IHLA that is truly unique and broader than in most associations. We never forget how lucky we are in this regard.
3. The partnerships and relationships we have forged with government agencies, academia, and the legislature have allowed us to leverage resources in ways that truly produce tangible results for the industry and our members.

Then, there's a fourth factor. It involves a few key moments in time where timing and luck intersected with opportunity.

Let's flash back again to 2003. Then-Senator Richard Lugar, a Hardwood tree landowner himself (and a tireless advocate for our industry) hosted a meeting in Jasper, Indiana. The purpose was to examine the mass exodus of furniture companies from the Carolinas to offshore places of cheap labor, particularly China. A day-long session was held, with speakers from all over, including the Carolinas, sharing stories and trends, with the goal of preventing the same from happening in Indiana.

That meeting, for IHLA, resulted in a document called "Hardwood Vision." It was a crude gameplan identifying vulnerabilities and necessities for domestic industry survival, realizing that without the secondary manufacturing sector, the primary sector could not thrive.

We needed reliable statistics to validate the economic strength of our industry, and a playbook for getting those numbers out to policy-makers and the general public. We needed a means of relaying the positive environmental benefits of wood to a wide variety of audiences, including builders, architects and the public. We needed technology and research transfer from universities to the industry, and the ability to help our members expand their markets for lumber and finished goods globally. Importantly, this was at a time when we were frustrated that we could

Hardwoods as part of their study. After we were invited to the table, we were handed a report of preliminary findings which showed that Hardwoods were in the top ten of Indiana agricultural sectors.

However, once we pointed out that they were only looking at the sawmill output side of Hardwoods, and not veneer, secondary, and ancillary businesses, we quickly vaulted to the top, accounting for 31 percent of all Indiana agricultural outputs, and larger than the next four sectors – combined!

This coincided with the election of Mitch Daniels as governor, and his creation of Indiana's first Department of Agriculture, making us the last state in the nation to have an Ag department. ISDA formed in 2005, and adopted the BioCrossroads report and recommendations as their first strategic plan, instantly elevating Hardwoods to the top of the food chain and giving us what we had planned to pay the think tank handsomely for – all for free. Suddenly the state's leadership was touting the Hardwood industry everywhere, including overseas, often to the chagrin of "traditional agriculture."

The importance of Hardwoods remains important to ISDA today, and they have a separate division for us, which has helped in several policy areas and legislative successes. By identifying as an agricultural industry with 70,000 employees and an annual economic impact of over \$10 billion, we have been able to pass key legislation, such as:

- The enactment of the nation's most effective Right to Practice Forestry law.
- An Ag-based sales tax exemption for timber harvesting equipment.
- Increased truck weight limits, again based on being part of agriculture rather than resource extraction.
- Continued legislative support of our efforts to block harmful legislation from activist groups, despite Indiana being second only to California in anti-forest activism. As social polarization has evolved, this has

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The Woods on Wheels mobile education classroom started its engine in April of 2021, and has barely stopped moving since, spreading positive messaging and the truth about woods economic and environmental advantages.

not get "traditional agriculture" in Indiana to accept Hardwoods as a part of agriculture.

Making a long story shorter here, after engaging in a costly agreement with a local think tank to compile data and execute our strategy, the think tank uprooted from Indiana and moved to the east coast, leaving us high and dry. We scoured other entities for a partner who could deliver the same, only to come up empty. That's right about when the luck set in.

Again, saving a long story here, a quasi-governmental entity (BioCrossroads) had formed in Indiana, primarily for the purpose of doing a comprehensive study of Indiana agriculture and its economic impact. In fact, they actually held some meetings before deciding to include



The inaugural Hoosier Hardwood Festival was held August 27-29 in Indianapolis.

Ron Jones Hardwood Sales Hosts Penn-York Members

Photos by Gary Miller

Reno, PA—The Penn-York Lumbermen's Club met here recently at the Wanango Country Club. Ron Jones Hardwood Sales Inc. was the host for this meeting. Sawmill representatives in attendance reported a mixed market at the time of this meeting. Some were challenged in regard to finding enough logs due to rainy weather, while others reported their log decks were fine because they had brought in ample log inventory prior to the rain that occurred. Lumber species that were selling

strong at the time of this meeting included Hard and Soft Maple, Poplar and Walnut. Cherry sales were reported as fair and price weakness on Red Oak was evident. A recurring concern at all industry meetings was obvious at this meeting as well, and that pertained to a shortage of laborers.

Guests and members enjoyed a golf game, a buffet dinner and attended a presentation by Todd Swanson, PNC Bank's senior vice president and senior investment

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Stephen Zambo, Ally Global Logistics LLC, Weymouth, MA; Steve Jones, Ron Jones Hardwood Sales Inc., Union City, PA; Gregg Reese, PNC Bank, Erie, PA; Nate Jones, Ron Jones Hardwood Sales Inc.; and Matt Laskey, PNC Bank



Jesse LaSon, The Rossi Group, Cromwell, CT; Jack Monnoyer, Deer Park Lumber Inc., Tunkhannock, PA; and Chris Strang and Jordan McIlvain, Alan McIlvain Co., Marcus Hook, PA



Tom Armentano and Andy Dickinson, Sirianni Hardwoods Inc., Painted Post, NY; and Scott Silvis and Chris Calhoun, Pennsylvania Cherry LLC, Mercersburg, PA



Shawn Donovan, Jimmy Irwin and Mason Kauffman, Penn-Sylvan International Inc., Spartansburg, PA



Matt Lowry, Woodcraft Industries Inc., Greenville, PA; Matt Laskey, PNC Bank, Erie, PA; Greg Ochs, Hickman Lumber Co. Inc., Emlenton, PA; and Steve Jones, Ron Jones Hardwood Sales Inc., Union City, PA



Rick Rogers and Jeff Herman, Tanner Lumber Co. LLC, Wilmore, PA; Darrell Mitcheltree, Mitcheltree Bros. Logging and Lumber Inc., Pulaski, PA; and Jay Reese, Penn-Sylvan International Inc., Spartansburg, PA



Dave Sondel and Chris Fehr, U-C Coatings LLC, Buffalo, NY; and Adam Miller and Josiah Bloise, JB Mill & Fabricating Inc., New Castle, PA



Jesse LaSon, The Rossi Group, Cromwell, CT; Matthew Lowry, Woodcraft Industries Inc., Greenville, PA; Paul Kephart, Northwest Hardwoods Inc., Beachwood, OH; and Stephen Zambo, Ally Global Logistics LLC, Weymouth, MA



Kaylynn Ostergard and Diane Cooper, Ron Jones Hardwood Sales Inc., Union City, PA; Eddie Deavers, Danzer Lumber North America Inc., Shade Gap, PA; and Cheryl Xander, Ron Jones Hardwood Sales Inc.



Randy Flament, Emporium Hardwoods Inc., Emporium, PA; Trevor Vaughan, Ron Jones Hardwood Sales Inc., Union City, PA; and Russell Shamblen, Premium Hardwood Products Inc., Syracuse, NY



Rob Matson, Matson Lumber Co., Brookville, PA; Paul Kephart, Northwest Hardwoods Inc., Beachwood, OH; and Allen Guth, Guth Forest Products Inc., Tionesta, PA



Jason Roblee, Firth Maple Products, Spartansburg, PA; and Ted Korn and Kevin Smith, Matson Lumber Co., Brookville, PA



Gary Miller, National Hardwood Magazine, Memphis, TN; and Matt Miller and Steve Kurtz, Green Ridge Forest Products LLC, Cochranton, PA



Chris Fehr, U-C Coatings LLC, Buffalo, NY; Bob Pope, SII Dry Kilns, Montpelier, VT; Nate Jones, Ron Jones Hardwood Sales Inc., Union City, PA; and Dave Sondel, U-C Coatings LLC

NWFA Hosts Successful Wood Flooring Expo

Photos by Terry Miller

Orlando, FL—The National Wood Flooring Association's (NWFA) 2021 Wood Flooring Expo, was held recently here at the Orange County Convention Center. Organizers deemed it a tremendous success, with more than 2,500 attendees, numerous in-person networking opportunities, and a wide variety of education sessions.

This year, NWFA and the Coverings international tile and stone exhibition organizers co-located to simultaneously bring attendees to the NWFA's 2021 Wood Flooring Expo and Coverings 2021.

"We were very pleased with the results of co-locating with Coverings for our Expo this year, and the feedback from attendees and our exhibitors has been fantastic," said Michael Martin, President and CEO of the National Wood Flooring Association. "While COVID-19 had its impacts and restrictions, the level of engagement and the quality of interactions at this year's NWFA Expo was unparalleled."

This year's NWFA Expo featured:

- More than 20 speakers
- Education sessions designed to help attendees hone technical skills, and grow their business
- Live demonstrations
- New product demonstrations and exhibitions on the tradeshow floor
- NWFA Certified Professionals Pre-Expo Symposium
- Announcement of Hardwood Floors Magazine's "Wood Floor of the Year" winners

This year's NWFA Expo was made possible by Premier Sponsor, ProDriveHD.

"Our expectations were exceeded beyond imagina-

tion at this event with the number of new customers and the traction of contractors seeing our product," said Hollis Henderson of ProDriveHD. "This was a trendsetting event, and I think the people who did not attend this time missed an opportunity to learn from the in-person instruction and to experience the benefits like we did."

"While the footprint of the Expo was smaller than 2019, we enjoyed better than anticipated engagement from attendees and partners," explained Stephen Crawford, Sales Director of Canlank Coatings. "The event served as an ideal platform to introduce our new Organization, Canlak Coatings, and we're looking forward to next year's Expo in Tampa, FL."

A video recap of the 2021 NWFA Expo is now viewable on the NWFA's YouTube page, (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pa1SHG7HcRc>) and the NWFA currently is making plans for its next Expo in Tampa, FL, on April 12-14, 2022.

Additionally, Tommy Maxwell, Chairman and CEO of Maxwell Hardwood Flooring, Inc., Monticello, AR, was inducted into the NWFA Hall of Fame during the 2021 NWFA Convention and Expo.

The award recognizes individuals who make significant contributions to the wood flooring industry. Maxwell has been in the industry for 45 years and has worked for flooring companies such as Sykes, Bruce, Anderson and Robbins. He has served on the Board of Directors for the NWFA and was also Chairman. Maxwell has served on boards for the Hardwood Federation and NOFMA (National Wood Flooring Manufacturer's Association) as well as the Arkansas Forestry Association. He was instrumental in helping NOFMA merge with the NWFA

Please turn to page 50



Todd Steadman and Norm Steffy, Cummings Lumber Co. Inc., Troy, PA; and Thomas Agrachov and Hugo Silva, Newark Flooring Express LLC, Newark, NJ



Bobby Cloer, Oakcrest Lumber Inc., Newport, TN; Brad Jurkowski, Crystal Element Inc., Newton Upper Falls, MA; and George Teleshevsky, Crystal Element Inc., Brooklyn, MA



Brandon Loyd, The Wood Floor Store LLC, Florence, AL; Robin and William Church, Appalachian Lumber Co. Inc., Wilkesboro, NC; and Steven Moore, The Wood Floor Store LLC



Russ George, B.R. Funsten & Co./Tom Duffy Co., Manteca, CA; and Jim Duke, Graf Bros. Flooring & Lumber, South Shore, KY



Paul Rezuze Sr., Paul Rezuze Jr., and Randy McCullough, Wickham Hardwood Flooring, Wickham, QC



Elizabeth Baldwin, Kentwood, Kent, WA; and Todd Byrd, PLMI, Philadelphia, PA



Jim Bailey, Buchanan Hardwood Flooring LLC, Aliceville, AL; Elizabeth Baldwin, Kentwood, Kent, WA; and Doug Fikes and Rob Dahlberg, Buchanan Hardwood Flooring LLC



Steve Stoufflet, Robinson Lumber Company, New Orleans, LA; Giannina Vick, Bozovich USA, Austin, TX; and Drago Bozovich, Bozovich, Lima, Peru



Steve Stoufflet and Jacqueline Monteilh, Robinson Lumber Company, New Orleans, LA; Pat Wathen, Lanham Hardwood Flooring, Louisville, KY; and Dan Lennon, Robinson Lumber Company



Albert Posadas, Brittany Moore, Amber Stringer, Kyle Evans and Scott Fesus, Mullican Flooring, Johnson City, TN

Las Vegas Welcomes Back In-Person AWFS® Fair

Photos by Terry Miller

Las Vegas, NV—Economist Chris Kuehl was the scheduled keynote presentation at the 2021 AWFS® Fair, which was held here at the Las Vegas Convention Center. The session included a welcome from AWFS Board leadership, followed by an economic update focusing on manufacturing and the construction and housing markets.

The AWFS Fair (hosted by the Association of Woodworking & Furnishings Suppliers) has become a critical hub for international commerce in the woodworking in-

dustry. The AWFS Fair brings together the entire global home and commercial furnishings industry, including manufacturers and distributors of lumber, machinery, hardware, plastics, construction materials and other suppliers to furniture and cabinet manufacturers and custom woodworkers.

Additionally, the Fair offers educational opportunities for attendees and various demonstrations by experts in the industry. ■

For more information about the AWFS Fair, please visit www.AWFSFair.org.



Rich Gorrill, Hardwoods Distribution Inc., Phoenix, AZ; and Chris Knowles and Adam Chavez, Timber Products Co., Springhill, OR



Kathryn Constantine, Brown Wood Inc., Chicago, IL; and Sedrak Hovhannisyan, Usta Zakar Cabinets Inc., Arleta, CA



Robert Baldwin, Northwest Hardwoods Inc., Tacoma, WA; Sam Rickey, Forest Plywood, La Mirada, CA; Jason Gobel, Northwest Hardwoods Inc., Beachwood, OH; and Victor Garcia, Forest Plywood



Brianna Pelton and Dan Bohnert, WalzCraft, La Crosse, WI



Robin and Oscar Kasic, Josef's Art Woodturning & Son Inc., Hempstead, NY



Jeremy Peterman and Fiona Paolino, Peterman Lumber Inc., Fontana, CA; Dempsey Goedbloed, Unilin Industries, Belgium; and Wayne Nunnally, Peterman Lumber Inc.



Dennis McFadden, Architectural Woods LP, Tacoma, WA; and Mike Shuey, Cami Waner and Lee Jimerson, Collins, Wilsonville, OR



Paul Anderson, Min Xu and Heath Hightower, MJB Wood Group LLC, Dallas, TX



Paul Pendergast, Penn Forest Products, Long Beach, CA; Dennis Johnston, Golden State Reload, Perris, CA; Randy Miller, Pollmeier Inc., Westfield, IN; and Tim Wooley, Pollmeier Inc., Little Rock, AR



Jonah Chambers, Sara Tilton, Diana Jackson and Jeremy McClain, Osborne Wood Products Inc., Toccoa, GA

Additional photos on page 54

As seasons change...



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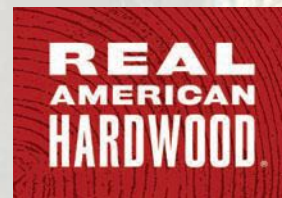
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It's Now or NEVER!



By Paul Miller, Jr.
President, National Hardwood Magazine



The Miller Wood Trade Publications' team is happy to be back on the road, reconnecting in person with our friends and colleagues in the industry. We have been particularly excited to hear from members of the Real American Hardwood Coalition (RAHC) about the progress they have made, during the COVID lockdown, to launch an industry-wide promotional effort to increase consumer awareness of the beauty, durability and value of Naturally Authentic™ Real American Hardwood™. We support the Coalition's work 100 percent.

I would like to share why I believe it is imperative that everyone in the industry support the RAHC, through both engagement and financial support.

There was a time when the U.S. Hardwood industry was producing over 14 billion board feet of lumber annually. Today, we are producing in excess of 6 billion board feet. We have relied heavily on the strength of our export markets for our industry's profitability, while the domestic market had, until recently, experienced challenging times.

American Hardwood products continue to lose significant market share to substitute materials, including plastics, concrete, carpeting and metals. These substitutes tend to be less expensive, perceived to be easier to care for, as well as a better value than American Hardwood products. We need to re-educate the purchasers of these materials. We need to provide an emotional connection early in the planning stages for the domestic consumer. We need to remind them that our products are **the** gold standard that everyone is working to imitate. Whether it be social media influencers, the big box stores like Home Depot or Lowes, home magazines or your favorite

HGTV personality, we need them to get on board and drive awareness and the desire for Real American Hardwood products.

We are in competition with well-established and well-funded movements that would be happy to see the U.S. Hardwood industry disappear. Even though the trade associations that you support are funding the Coalition, they cannot do it alone. To accomplish their long-term goals, additional financial assistance is needed. I am asking you today, to financially support the Real American Hardwood campaign. Give for your family company's legacy, for your children and grandchildren's future; give for your employees; give because it's your future and it is going to take each and every one of us to make this initiative successful!

The Hardwood industry needs to recognize that we are in a war; yes, a war to stay relevant in the marketplace with consumers. This is a rallying cry for everyone to get involved... from every Hardwood manufacturer, wholesaler, distribution and concentration yard operators; to secondary manufacturers, including furniture, cabinet, flooring, millwork, moulding; industrial product producers; freight forwarders; chemical and equipment manufacturers, equipment suppliers, right down to the media. It's going to take MONEY, it's going to take a COMMITMENT, it's going to take ALL of us coming together to support the Real American Hardwood promotion effort to move our industry and products to the forefront.

Visit www.RealAmericanHardwood.org today to learn how you can support the effort. Any support YOU can give is appreciated and much needed! ■

PENN-YORK *Continued from page 32*

manager. Swanson echoed what other economists have shared this year and that was in regard to, as he explained, "A surge in residential construction has led to very strong demand for building materials, such as lumber. Homebuilding was much lower in the decade before the pandemic, leading to reduced manufacturing capacity for lumber and other materials. As a result, sawmills and other suppliers have been unable to keep up with demand, causing shortages."

The PNC report from which Swanson spoke also noted: "These shortages will work themselves out over the rest of 2021. Higher prices are discouraging some demand and are also encouraging producers to expand capacity. The initial surge in demand for many goods will fade as consumers spend down their stimulus savings. Household spending growth will also shift to services, rather than goods, as consumers feel more comfortable going out. Transportation bottlenecks will abate as supply chains normalize. As a result, shortages will dissipate and some inflationary pressures will reverse themselves later this year."

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Ben Krieg, Kevin Williams and Chad Moon, Ron Jones Hardwood Sales Inc., Franklin, PA



Burt Craig, Matson Lumber Co., Brookville, PA; Greg Stascavage, Pennsylvania Cherry LLC, Mercersburg, PA; Brandon Ferman, Meridien Hardwoods of PA Inc., Pittsfield, PA; Marty James, Penn-Sylvan International Inc., Spartansburg, PA; and Stephen Zambo, Ally Global Logistics LLC, Weymouth, MA

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PONDERS HOLLOW *Continued from page 25*



Ponders Hollow's new showroom, located at 16 Ponders Hollow Road in Westfield, MA, opened in June 2021.



This custom staircase, with painted Poplar mouldings, trim and handrail, is finished with custom White Oak stair treads.

floor—it's there for a lifetime for generations to walk on it. At the point you realize that, it becomes a very cool, rewarding and proud job to do."

Twenty employees work in the 40,000-square-foot plant. Ponders Hollow believes that safety and quality product is more

important than speed and turnaround. "As much as the machines are doing the work," said Gerry Lashway, "we are hands-on because of the way we set it up and handle the boards. We are putting a set of sharp eyes on the machines and a steady hand on the boards. We have six people on the flooring line looking at every board for quality control, grading every board by hand. That means we run the product a little slower to keep the product quality right where we want it. Unfortunately, if you can't get something done in two to three weeks a lot of people will go elsewhere. As much as we try and meet those demands, we realize we do it differently. We don't run the moulders twice as fast to crank it out. We start with the customer's specifications, so it takes a little bit longer. Our attention to detail sets us apart."

That detail shows in the enormous product catalog (262-plus pages) of millwork that Ponders Hollow can produce, with over 5,000 profiles. To assist selection, the plant houses a newly remodeled showroom that opened in June 2021 for both flooring and millwork. The company produces more one-time millwork jobs than duplicate jobs, custom made to drawings and blueprints from architects and builders. For each custom job, the company makes a CAD drawing and, after ap-

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These Red Oak flooring and walls are located in the Walden Pond State Reserve Visitor's Center in Concord, MA.



Left, Larry Lashway of Lashway Lumber and Gerry Lashway of Ponders Hollow.

proval, the knife and the product.

Flooring also varies greatly. Gerry Lashway explained that, "One day, we'll be running a 5-inch White Oak floor, one day an 8-inch floor, the next day it's got knots. There are so many different options because we don't specialize in one specific thing. You just learn to roll with it!" As a result, Ponders Hollow consistently adds to its product lines.

Each job at Ponders Hollow is unique in its own way.

For Gerry Lashway, it's still a thrill to walk the plant floor. "I go out there and go, *Whoa! This crown moulding is amazing!* We have 200 different ones and I'm still amazed. It's gratification for what we do here. Love what you do and enjoy it!"

Ponders Hollow is a member of the Wood Products Manufacturers Association, National Wood Flooring Association, Homebuilders Association of Western Massachusetts and the Architectural Woodworking Institution. ■

For more information, go to www.pondershollow.com.



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Two dry kilns by SII Dry Kilns are pictured that hold 50,000 board feet each and are located at R&M Wood's property. The company dries 300,000 board feet of lumber monthly.

Site Operations Manager and Kiln Operator Molly Moore explained. "The lumber that we specialize in is heavy tie, sided and our customers prefer the overlength, which creates higher yield. We procure our lumber from mills spanning from Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Mississippi and Tennessee."

When asked about the keys to success for their operation Moore said, "Our small operation is able to focus and maintain efficiency of high-quality lumber. We understand how much the forest plays a critical role in the global environment. That is why we are committed to supporting sustainable production of forest products



Thomas Rhodes, R&M Wood's yard foreman and sales associate.

by harvesting all that we possibly can from every piece of lumber we process. For example, for local farmers we turn our straight-line ripped pieces into tomato stakes. God blessed us with one of the best renewable resources



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Purchasing - Andy Dickinson
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Seth Moore, R&M's procurement manager and lumber inspector.

and for that we are thankful.”

As for the future of R&M, Moore said, “This company was built on the shoulders of a hardworking and determined man, and we will continue to make his name and company known as nothing short of excellence in the Hardwood industry.”

R&M Wood Inc. is a member of the NHLA and the West Side Club. ■

For more information contact them at 501-941-3706.



Molly Moore, operations manager and kiln operator.

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Thompson Appalachian Hardwoods in Huntland, TN has two 100,500 BF Package Kilns with Heat Exchangers and Direct Fire Burner.

Mary Mathews noted. “We can find the part when a client needs it. We are going to make sure that we get the part to them as fast as possible to avoid downtime,” she stated. “Taking care of our past customers and keeping everyone running smoothly is just as important to us as our new customers.”

In the Hardwood industry, SII is known for offering a lot of options for their equipment. “We are definitely not cookie-cutter, and we are not boxed into certain types of designs,” said Ben Mathews. “Everyone knows they get

that backstage access to any of us – after the sale,” he stated, “and I think that is exceptional.”

Brian Turlington added, “It’s a collaboration between the customer and our salespeople in which the customer knows – or has a good idea of – what they want, and then, we customize that for them.” SII provides drying variations for different species of Hardwoods, from the amount and type of heating required (steam, gas-direct or indirect) to the type and amount of venting (passive, powered, or heat exchangers) and, of course, the fan systems, which all utilize energy saving variable frequency drives (VFD’s).

In softwood, SII offers two primary types of kilns for customers.

Some softwood customers remain committed to “batch”-style kilns, while others prefer the continuous DPK-style kilns, which require 24/7 operation. Regardless of the type of track kiln desired, SII can provide the heating system that works best for the customer. From direct-fired gas or biomass systems to steam heated kilns, SII has done them all. Brian Turlington noted that such versatility is based on: “What will work best for the customer today and in the future?”

Ben Mathews commented, “We have seen our growth in softwood steadily increase, and today we do more and more softwood kilns every year.”

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PLM’s Senior Loss Control Rep, Rachel Gamblin, on-site with customers, Dana & Sean O’Brien, at their business in Paso Robles, CA. Special thanks to everyone at “A Place to Grow” for hosting the photo shoot.



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dustry, the company points out. SII was the first American kiln manufacturer to introduce VFD's to the industry in the mid-80's and has been instrumental in developing the best known in-kiln weight-based computerized control system, "Sample Watch," with over 400 systems in operation today.

According to Turlington, SII works as a partner with its customers. The firm gets over 80 percent of their sales as repeat business. SII can make acquiring a new kiln a turnkey operation or have the owner participate in the process at whatever level they prefer.

"We want to supply a quality product that's long-lasting, regardless of whether it's Hardwood or softwood," Turlington stated. And SII welcomes any challenge. "We aren't afraid of taking on any size project no matter how unique," he said.

SII Dry Kilns believes very strongly in supporting industry associations and is a member of the National Hardwood Lumber Association, Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association, Hardwood Manufacturers Association, National Wooden Pallet and Container Association, Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers Inc., Appalachian Lumbermen's Club, Indiana Hardwood Lumbermen's Association, Penn-York Lumbermen's Club, Kentucky Forest Industries Association, Keystone



Missouri Walnut in Neosho, MO has 29 100,000 BF SII Design Kilns.

Kiln Drying Association, New England Kiln Drying Association, Great Lakes Kiln Drying Association, North American Wholesale Lumber Association, Northeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association, Southeastern Dry Kiln Club, Western Hardwood Association and the New England Lumbermen's Association. ■

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One of IHLA's annual charitable events is the "Casting for the Cure" fishing tournaments. Over the years, the proceeds have gone to cancer research, ALS, and grain bin awareness, always in support of an IHLA member.

Improvement and Regeneration Center; the Center for Advanced Forestry Systems; Hardwood CLT research and applications; Hardwood University, and Woods on Wheels.

We have partnered with the state DNR to make timber theft a felony and run off the bad actors; the ongoing management of our state forests; the creation of a fallen loggers memorial; the Hoosier Hardwood Festival, and Woods on Wheels.

increasingly become more challenging.

While our alignment with agriculture has been the most comprehensive key to so much of our evolution and success, the other partnerships we share have been critical and necessary in executing our strategy to shift the message about Hardwoods to the public.

We have partnered with Purdue University on numerous major projects, including the Hardwood Tree

State University on an annual architectural student competition; research on thermal treating of Hardwoods, and robotics.

We have partnered with 4-H and FFA to support their work and promote careers in Hardwoods to youth at key decision-making times.

These are just scratching the surface of the importance

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Linwood Truitt and John Stevenson are in charge of kiln-dried lumber sales; and Ray Turner handles industrial sales at Beasley Forest Products.

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Email: john.stevenson@beasleygroup.com



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Ray Turner
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Email: ray.turner@beasleygroup.com

of these partnerships, and there is more to tell. However, while evolving with a changing world, we have built and strengthened those key services that have gotten us where we are. We look to continuously improve upon our annual February convention, now a must-attend event for the global Hardwood industry, and we understand how much our members value our lobbying efforts at the statehouse and in Washington D.C.

For the last ten years, we have operated an insurance agency that helps our members find the best deals on property/casualty, workers compensation and auto insurance. We are also able to help find options on health and life insurance.

We understand with our reputation as a leading association comes responsibility, so we sponsor many partnerships and charitable causes every single year, including the Hardwood Federation, Real American Hardwood Coalition, Tree Farm, Riley Children's Hospital, the Woodland Steward, and many more.

But let's make no mistake about what makes IHLA successful. It's our volunteers. Our committees include a Forestry Council of boots-on-the ground foresters and loggers. We have an Industry Promotions committee that has produced Woods on Wheels and the Hoosier Hardwood Festival. Our executive committee meets month-

ly and expedites good programs that come from all the committees and our 30+ member Board of Directors stays engaged and involved.

IHLA is and always will be about our members and that uniquely-broad spirit of volunteerism that makes everything work, and helps spread the enthusiasm and sense of giving back from one generation to the next. We are blessed that people like the late Milt Cole chose Indiana for a home, as did great companies like Pike Lumber, Frank Miller, Wood-Mizer and so many more. We are grateful that people like Tom and Mary Francis Koetter would create the Forest Discovery Center in Indiana; that Purdue and Ball State Universities call Indiana home, and that people like Tom and Ronda Derleth and a network of past presidents have stayed involved and spent the last 40-plus years saying yes to every request IHLA has made of them. It should also come as no surprise that the current chairman of the Hardwood Federation Board and the Hardwood Federation PAC are both Hoosiers.

For IHLA, it has been about evolving, focusing on core services, leveraging partnerships, aligning with agriculture, and just pure luck that we are here in Indiana at the right moment in history. ■

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and has worked diligently to raise funds for the Hardwood Federation, which is dedicated to promoting and supporting the Hardwood industry and is the voice of the industry in Washington, D.C. Maxwell also established the Legacy Scholarship program, which provides training for future generations of Hardwood flooring professionals. He is one of only 17 individuals to be recognized for the NWFA Hall of Fame award in the 35-year history of the association.

During his acceptance of the award, Maxwell recollected the things that he learned from his mentor, Sykes Har-

ris, Sr. of Sykes Flooring in Warren, AR. He then concluded with, "He told me the industry was full of wonderful people... and he was so right."

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 is in Chesterfield, MO, and can be contacted at 800-422-4556 (USA and Canada), 636-519-9663 (local and international), or at www.nwfa.org. ■



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Tommy Maxwell, Maxwell Hardwood Flooring, Monticello, AR, was inducted into the NWFA Hall of Fame during the NWFA Convention and Expo.



Jim Duke, Chris Moore and Glen Miller, Graf Bros. Flooring & Lumber, South Shore, KY

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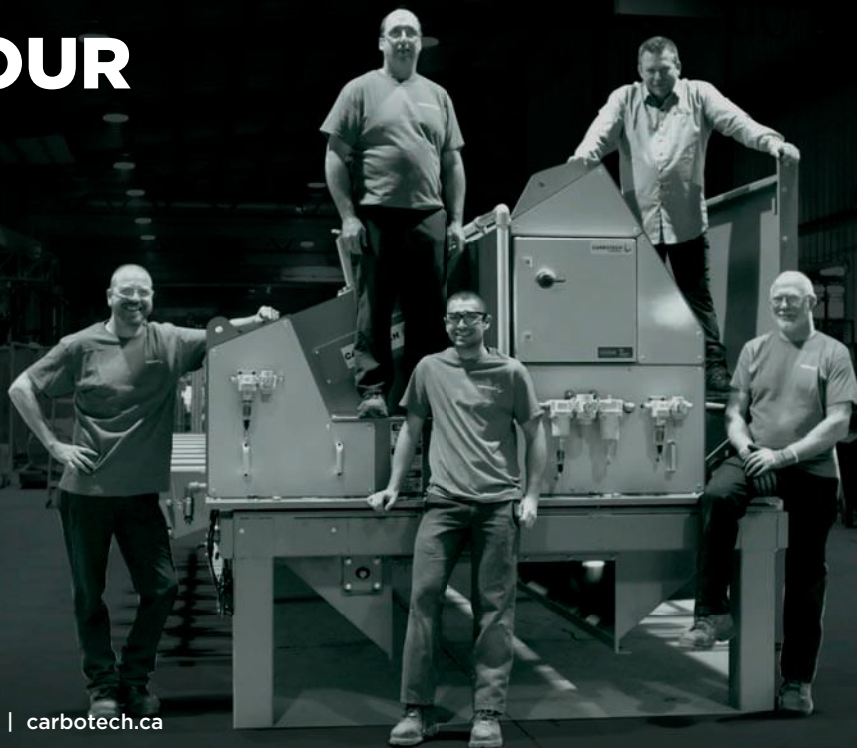
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Terry Miller, National Hardwood Magazine, Memphis, TN; Kris Palin, Allegheny Wood Products Inc., Petersburg, WV; and Ed Mikowski, Mount Storm Forest Products Inc., Windsor, CA



Steve Gunderson, Hermitage Hardwood Lumber Sales Inc., Cookeville, TN; Beth Banks and Mickey Gossi, Woodgrain Lumber & Composites, Meridian, ID; and Parker Boles, Hermitage Hardwood Lumber Sales Inc.



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PENN-YORK *Continued from page 41*

"The outlook for the U.S. economy remains extremely positive."

Swanson cited housing start projections as follows: 1.676 million units forecast for 2021, 1.660 million units in 2022, and 1.536 million units in 2023.

Penn-York also hosted a golf game at this meeting. The winners were: Jack Monnoyer, (#10) closest to the pin; Jeff Herman, (#18) longest drive; Matt Laskey (#4) closest to the 2nd shot; Jay Reese (#5) closest to the pin; low gross – Jack Monnoyer, 82 and Jay Reese, 84.

The host for this meeting, Ron Jones Hardwood Sales Inc., was established in 1983, is located in Union City, PA and markets premium Northern Appalachian Hardwood lumber. Learn more at www.ronjoneshardwood.com.

The final Penn-York meeting of 2021 will be held Sept. 13 in State College and will be hosted by Walker Lumber and Forcey Lumber in conjunction with Pennsylvania Forest Products Association. ■

**Learn more about this organization
at www.pennYork.org.**

LAKE STATES *Continued from page 8*

He sells lumber to distribution yards and end users, who comprise the majority of his customer base. These include companies that manufacture flooring, doors, cabinets and moulding. "Everyone I talk to says sales are crazy-good," he observed. "Most of them are turning business away because they don't have enough employees to produce more. It doesn't matter who I talk with, they're all in the same shape."

Transportation has not been a problem overall, he said. "We've had some problems, but not a lot." Specifically, at one point, he couldn't hire trucks for two or three weeks. "There were no trucks to be had," he stated. "It wasn't a price issue. Transportation rates are going up, but that's not too bad for us." The issue of no trucks being available has "more or less resolved itself for us," he said. ■

NORTHEAST *Continued from page 8*

months ago, he replied, "That's an interesting question. My first thought was 'as good as.' But I guess I would say 'a little better.' I say that because the Red Oak and Cherry have kind of stabilized. Their growth curve is pretty much done, but they have stabilized. So, I think that's

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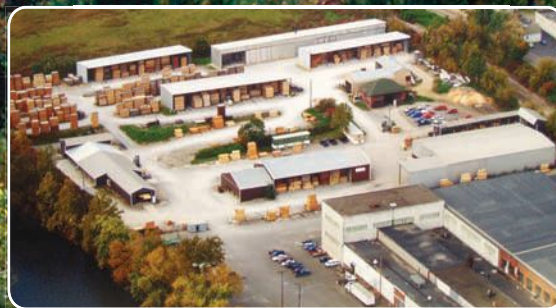
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NORTHEAST *Continued*

good in that regard. Regarding all the other species, I don't know that there's a lot changed. They still seem to be moving. What we see now is a continuation of the trend we saw six months ago. Certainly, we're not seeing the same pace, as far as price changes, but there still seems to be some growth."

He handles Hard and Soft Maple, Birch, White Oak, Ash and Hickory. His best seller, he observed, is White Oak in FAS. Thicknesses he sells are mostly 4/4 with some 5/4 in Red Oak and Hickory.

He sells his product to distribution yards and end users. His customers' sales seem to be "pretty good," he stated. "On their end," he said, "I'm not sure if it's just because lumber seems short. I guess if the lumber flow were closer to normal, would the sales still be as strong? That's the million-dollar question that none of us know. What seems to be going on now is that labor and trucking are the two problems everyone talks about. And if the labor levels were closer to normal, then where would this market be? I don't know. It's kind of a relative question. The way things are now, I think everyone is doing well and the product is certainly moving."

Asked if he sees any problems in the marketplace, he stated, "Labor and freight are the two universal problems I hear everywhere." ■

SOUTHEAST *Continued from page 10*

and 3A are going strong. So, all in all, I'd have to say the market is pretty good.

"We're doing a lot more pine, and that's a little bit shaky," he continued. "But the Hardwood side of it seems to be holding in there pretty well. You can't ask for White Oak to be any better. You can't ask for Ash to be any better. Nobody's ever seen Poplar at over \$2 per foot. That's huge. All in all, we're in pretty good shape. But I wish we had more logs."

His market is "definitely better" than it was a few months ago, he observed.

He sells Red and White Oak, Poplar, Ash and Cypress in No. 3A, No. 2A and No. 1 Common and FAS, all in 4/4. His best seller, he said, is White Oak. "It doesn't matter what grade," he observed. "If it's in White Oak, it's pretty strong."

This lumber goes to distribution yards and end users in both the U.S. and overseas. "Right now," he noted, "we're trending more toward the domestic market. We're doing more green because of the demand. And that seems to be working pretty well."

Among his customers, "Everybody I talk to seems to be doing well," he stated. The customers of his customers are pushing for certain lumber items and he is working to get those products sent, he said.

Like many lumber providers, he has found transportation to be a problem. "Containers are a pain to get, both with the ship lines and trying to get them to the port. It seems like the flatbed freight is starting to ease up a little bit. That's helping. More of our lumber is going domestic." ■

WEST COAST *Continued from page 10*

couple weeks, things have been a little easier."

An Oregon lumber provider said, "The market is brisk. The problem is the supply chain. You hear this every day. In particular, it's difficult being able to replenish stock that you've sold because of delays and the freight problem, including the cost of freight. It's exorbitant. We have customers who are looking at all-time high prices for sheet goods or lumber. What we just paid for Black Walnut would make your nose bleed.

"But, if you're going to have the product," he stated "you've got to pay the price. We understand the issues our vendors are going through, and we're all in this together. I have some concerns, however, that if the market-demand changes, you could be stuck with some very expensive inventory to move through the market. So, I think everyone's going to be looking at and forecasting what's going to happen, coming into the fall and winter. Most people are saying they believe the market is going to be strong into 2022, and I certainly hope so."

Asked if he has ever seen anything like this high demand/low supply dynamic, he replied, "I've been in this business since 1972 and, no, I've seen nothing like this."

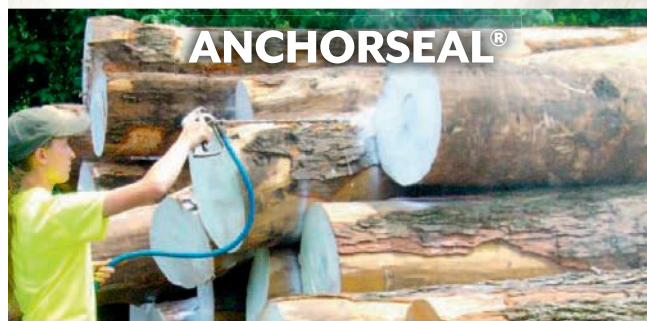
He sells all domestic Hardwoods and some imported lumber in No. 1 Common and up, Select and Better and FAS. "We don't handle 2 Common," he said. He sells lumber in 4/4 through 8/4. His best sellers are Poplar and White Oak.

His customers are companies that make store fixtures and cabinets as well as retail lumber yards. Some companies are remodeling stores, and that is helpful to this lumberman. He said, "I think for the most part, my customers are doing well. A lot of our big cabinet companies, however, are stuck because they weren't forecasting their purchases and were depending on just-in-time. They've been caught in a squeeze. It's tough.

"Transportation costs are way up," he observed. "Once

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WEST COAST *Continued*

we get the product into our facilities, we have our own trucks, and we make deliveries to our customers. With bringing in material from our vendors, it's tough to get containers." ■

ONTARIO *Continued from page 12*

wholesalers. As such, prices have risen slightly for 4/4 through 8/4 FAS and Select, while price gains are broader for kiln-dried Basswood.

With the housing markets strong in the U.S. and Canada, Birch which is very reliant on this sector, is pushing secondary manufacturers and wholesalers to buy more supplies of this species. Prices remain stable, with all grades of kiln-dried Birch performing well. Contacts reported there is a stronger demand for premium color stocks.

Hard Maple sales continue to be strong for kiln-dried No. 1 Common and Better grades. Contacts noted that No. 2A supplies are building sufficiently to meet demand. Premium color Hard Maple is performing better than Un-

selected or other colored material. Sales are strong on both sides of the border for this species due to the housing market, thus causing price rises. Supplies of developing green stock are meeting markets' needs. The same is reported for Soft Maple. Demand from consumers for Hardwood finished goods is also a big driver for this species. Again, the market is demanding premium color kiln-dried Soft Maple rather than Unselected or other color material.

The National Bank of Canada's (NBC) most recent 2021 Monthly Economic Monitor, stated that following substantial progress in the struggle against COVID-19, the world faces a new enemy in the Delta variant. This threat has led many investors to question the extent of a strong recovery of the global economy and to go back to safe-haven vehicles such as USD-denominated bonds. NBC's reply in response to the question of the market being justified in its fears for world output, their answer varies according to the degree of immunity attained in each region. In developed economies, where vaccination rollouts are moving along, the Delta variant could bring a rise in new cases without overwhelming health-care systems, since the main aim has always been to avoid hospitalizations and fatalities rather than to prevent spread, and current conditions are still consistent with a gradual re-opening.



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The outlook for emerging countries is not so upbeat as their lag in vaccinations increases the risk that one or more of them could cause a situation like in India. Though far-reaching restrictions are fairly rare in the emerging economies, the virus could force more localized restrictions. Despite a rise in uncertainty, NBC leaves their global growth forecast unchanged for both 2021 (6.0 percent) and 2022 (4.5 percent).

NBC says the U.S. is recovering fast. After an expansion of 6.4 percent annualized in the first quarter of 2021, they expect Q2 to show an acceleration to about 10 percent, with household spending likely to be the main driver, and business investment also contributing to growth. Residential investment could be set for a pause after several months of frenetic activity. Although they think the labor market is in better shape than some of the data would suggest, it will take more time for the upside effects of reopening to be fully reflected in the numbers. This will allow the Fed to keep its monetary policy accommodative in the coming months. The median forecast of the Federal Open Market Committee participants suggests that short-term interest rates will remain abnormally low relative to the output gap through to the end of 2023. Under these conditions, the U.S. economy is likely to continue outperforming over the longer term. NBC sees real GDP growth of 6.9 percent this year and 4.3 percent next year.

In Canada, recent data are highly encouraging, although many are apprehensive of a fourth wave of COVID-19. Canadians responded positively to vaccine rollout. Hospitalizations fell sharply in recent weeks (as of time of writing) which allowed an easing of public-health restrictions. After a moderation of expansion in Q2 due to public-health measures and to production issues in automaking by reason of the chip shortage, impressive growth continues to be expected with the coming

reopening of services entailing close physical proximity. Forest-product prices have subsided considerably but soaring natural gas prices drove the Bank of Canada commodity price index to a 13-year high in July. In this context, the labor market is expected to recover rapidly in the coming months as hiring intentions and labor shortages suggest strong employer demand.

A recent population survey sees a gain of 231,000 jobs that erases at one stroke almost all the losses of the third

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ONTARIO *Continued*

wave of the pandemic. Most summer gains were in accommodation/food services and retailing. The wave of hiring will continue: the Bank of Canada's Business Outlook Survey reports record hiring intentions.

The report is the same for small and medium businesses, which in the summer reported labor scarcities as acute as before the pandemic – 41 percent worried about a lack of skilled labor and 27 percent about lack of unskilled labor. This situation is explained: in June

about 800,000 workers were still drawing on the income support program. This support is slated to diminish considerably in August, from \$500 a week to \$300, which could encourage workers to go back to work and reduce labor-market tensions.

Additionally, Finance Minister Freeland said economists are forecasting a strong economic recovery, but Ottawa is retaining the power to extend support measures until the end of November if needed. ■

QUEBEC *Continued from page 12*

remaining at a good pace, added some contacts. There were also more prospective customers seeking additional Basswood supplies or as an alternative for the more difficult to find species or wood composites. Demand from Southeast Asia and Mexico end users were seeking good volumes of Basswood.

The regionally important Hard Maple gap between supply and demand is getting narrower, due to improved production in most regions in Canada and the U.S. border states. Flooring manufacturers, cabinet and components producers are vying for this species.

On the Soft Maple side, furniture manufacturers and cabinetmakers are keeping up a steady demand of this species and are in need of more. Demand of this species varies by grade; upper grade availability is lagging demand, whereas No. 1 Common and No. 2A are more available.

Almost everyone who is producing, selling or using Cherry has had to adjust to the reduced demand of this species from China. Although demand for Cherry has risen in the U.S., Mexico and Canada from their very low levels, contacts noted.

Market activity for Hickory is vibrant, especially with residential wood flooring. Manufacturers have managed to build larger Hickory inventories over the last several months. Demand by consumers for Hickory flooring is holding up. Hicko-



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ry is also moving to other end user sectors domestically and to export markets, led by Mexico.

It was noted that residential and truck trailer flooring manufacturers have been very busy. Prices for Oak strip flooring have climbed to record highs, with demand approaching levels seen in the mid-2000s. Truck trailer flooring markets are strong with plants trying to ramp up production. Flooring manufacturers say they need more lumber to meet current and anticipated demand. With the housing sectors in both the U.S. and Canada, it doesn't appear it will let up any time soon.

Flooring manufacturers are also aggressively pursuing raw materials of Red Oak, and green Nos. 2A and 3A. Demand from wholesalers for No. 1 Common Red Oak is also good. Exports to China for kiln-dried Red Oak are sluggish, which is seen as normal for this time of year.

Demand for Poplar remains solid and strong. Interest from long-time customers is good, and shortages of competing materials are also helping sustain Poplar demand. Poplar producers and users watch softwood availability and pricing since both materials vie on the same markets. With softwood prices coming down, it has had little to no effect on Poplar business.

Walnut is doing well on the domestic front, in the U.S. and demand has climbed from Mexico.

Despite the pandemic, close to 70 percent of business owners in Canada feel optimistic says a Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) poll. The CIBC study suggests business owners feel brighter days may be ahead: 69 percent say they feel optimistic about the long-term future of their business. Findings also show there is a downward trend in how business owners feel they have been negatively impacted by COVID-19: 58 percent, down from 68 percent reported in November 2020 and 81 percent in April 2020.

"Canadian business owners continue to show extraordinary resil-

ience during these difficult times," said Senior Vice-President, Business Banking, CIBC, in a prepared statement. "As the economy moves toward opening up, I encourage owners to seek advice about any additional relief they may need, including help with cash-flow management or additional future-proofing to meet their long-term ambitions."

Top concerns remain similar to when the pandemic first broke, but amongst fewer business owners. A reduced demand for products/services is still a worry for

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TERESA MOORMAN is the lumber purchasing agent and Director of Human Resources and Environmental Coordinator for **Mid-America Cabinets Inc.**, located in Gentry, AR. Her current responsibilities include all purchasing, hiring of new employees and filing state and federal environmental reports.

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Moorman graduated from McDonald County High School, located in Anderson, MO, in 1979 and Missouri Southern State University, located in Joplin, MO, in 1982. She has worked at Mid-America Cabinets for 37 years.

Moorman has been church treasurer at Sulphur Springs United Methodist Church for 38 years. She enjoys doing anything outdoors and spending time with her 12 grandchildren. She is also an avid Arkansas Razorback fan.

For more information about Mid-America Cabinets, visit www.midamericacabinets.com.

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

BRET FERGUSON has been the primary purchaser of lumber and plywood for **Crestwood Inc.** located in Salina, KS since 2000.

Crestwood is a manufacturer of fine custom cabinetry that purchases 300,000 board feet of green lumber annually of 4/4 and 5/4 thicknesses. The company offers Alder, Rift and Quartered White Oak, Red Oak, Hard and Soft Maple, Cherry, Walnut, Beech and Basswood.

Crestwood produces custom cabinetry that is sold and distributed through dealer networks throughout the U.S. The company also manufactures custom countertops in solid surface and stone. Crestwood is a member of the National Kitchen and Bath Association.

Ferguson started at Crestwood 43 years ago after

graduating from North Central Kansas Technical College where he learned carpentry and cabinetmaking.

When he is not working, Ferguson enjoys restoring his 1949 Chevy pickup "Ruby," as well as maintaining his family's 109-year-old farmhouse. Ferguson has been happily married to his high school sweetheart, June, since 1979.

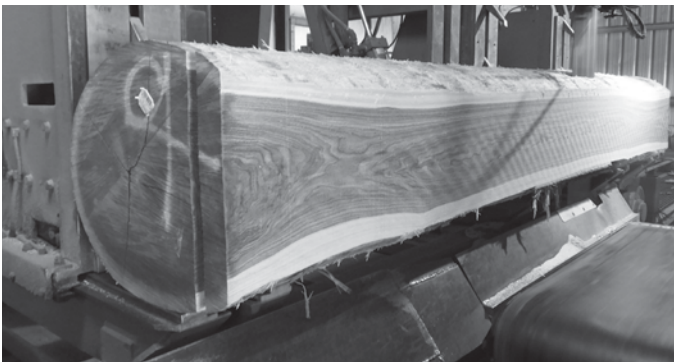
For more information about Crestwood, visit www.crestwood-inc.com.

ANDRE LETOURNEAU is president/owner of **West Hartford Stairs & Cabinets Inc.**, located in Newington, CT.

Please turn the page



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WHO'S WHO

Continued

West Hartford Stairs & Cabinets manufactures custom and elliptical floating stairways, as well as custom kitchen cabinets. The company purchases a total of 200,000 board feet annually of Poplar, Red and White Oak, Hard and Soft Maple, Red Birch, Cherry, Walnut and Butternut (No. 1 Common, Select & Better and FAS).

Some softwoods are also purchased for use in manufacturing. Certified wood is purchased at the request of customers. The company offers value-added services with its full mill operation.

Letourneau has worked at the company for nearly 46 years, with a total of 19 spent in his current position. His first job in the forest products industry was framing houses during summer months and installing wood shingle roofing beginning at age 16.

In 1975, he began with West Hartford Stairs & Cabinets, working in the mill, framing rough stairs and install-

ing finished stairs. Letourneau then moved into sales for the company in 1985 and into management in 1998.

He and his wife, Terry, have three daughters, a grandson and two granddaughters. In his free time, Letourneau enjoys hunting, fishing, golfing and snowmobiling.

More information can be found by visiting www.stairsandcabinets.com. ■

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NEWS DEVELOPMENTS *Continued from page 15*

for 2022-Q2 utilizes smoothed data for two leading model inputs: residential remodeling permits and single-family housing starts. Using unsmoothed inputs in the LIRA model would have projected an unlikely annual growth rate roughly twice as large as reported. The Remodeling Futures Program will continue to monitor input volatility.

For more information, contact Kerry Donahue at 617-495-7640 or kerry_donahue@harvard.edu.

CABINET MANUFACTURERS RECOVER FROM COVID LOCKDOWN

According to the Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturers Association's (KCMA) monthly Trend of Business Survey, participating cabinet manufacturers reported an increase in overall cabinet sales of 32.9 percent for May 2021 compared to the same month in 2020, according to the most recent data available. Custom sales are up 26.9 percent, semi-custom increased 32.6 percent, and stock sales increased 34.4 percent.

The numbers reflect the continued recovery from the

height of the pandemic lockdown. When looking at the month-to-month comparison, cabinet sales varied slightly one way or the other. Overall sales increased 0.8 percent in May 2021 compared to April 2021. Custom sales were down 2.0 percent, semi-custom sales up 2.1 percent, and stock sales increased 0.5 percent.

Sales in 2021 remain strong. Overall year-to-date cabinet sales are up 21.6 percent when compared to the same time period in 2020. Custom sales are up 23.5 percent, semi-custom sales increased 21.3 percent and stock sales increased 21.4 percent.

Survey participants include stock, semi-custom and custom companies whose combined sales represent approximately 75 percent of the U.S. kitchen cabinet and bath vanity market. KCMA is the major trade association for kitchen cabinet and bath vanity manufacturers and key suppliers of goods and services to the industry. KCMA has been compiling and reporting industry sales data for more than 40 years.

For more information, go to www.kcma.org.

Please turn to page 71

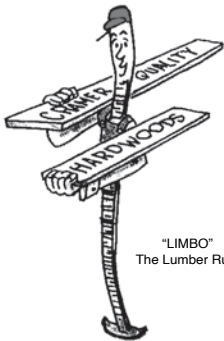
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TRADE TALK



Brandon Clark

ERIN, TN—Brandon Clark, owner of Clark Hardwoods, LLC, located here, recently installed a new 50,000-board-foot DH kiln by Nyle Systems, located in Brewer, ME. The dehumidifier was completely refurbished, bringing the total drying capacity to 125,000 board feet.

Moreover, at Clark Lumber Co. in Red Boiling Springs, TN, the company increased their covered air-drying capacity to 3 million board feet.

The addition of the new DH kiln brings the total kiln capacity of the two facilities to 900,000 board feet.

The company has six sawmills providing approximately 50 million board feet of Appalachian Hardwoods in 4/4 to 8/4 thicknesses. The species manufactured are Red and White Oak, Poplar, Ash, Hard Maple, Walnut, Cherry and Hickory. The companies both operate a planer and supply both green and kiln-dried lumber, cants plus cross ties, serving both the domestic and export markets.

For more information, go to www.clarklumbercompany.com.



Luc Houde

PLESSISVILLE, QC—Carbotech Group, with its head office here, recently announced its acquisition of Autolog, a company specializing in wood processing optimization and automation.

Carbotech Group has been experiencing continuous growth as the wood processing industry has boomed. As a result, the company developed an expansion strategy, which included acquiring Autolog. As for Autolog—a company with globally recognized expertise that has been in

AN UPDATE COVERING THE LATEST NEWS ABOUT HARDWOOD SUPPLIERS/VENDORS

business for more than 30 years—it was looking to join a visionary group that would value both parties' expertise.

The result: Carbotech, which designs and manufactures machinery for the sawmill industry, has added another string to its bow, according to Carbotech. Thanks to Autolog's optimization and automation services, the company will now be able to provide an even greater range of solutions to its customers. From mechanics to electronics, customers will now be able to enjoy complementary products and services from experts working in tandem.

"Autolog and Carbotech wanted to pool their knowledge and skills to create high-value products and enter exciting new markets. Acquisition proved to be the most promising and mutually beneficial solution. Carbotech Group is proud to have acquired such a well-established company whose goals and values align with our own," stated Luc Houde, executive vice president of Carbotech Group.

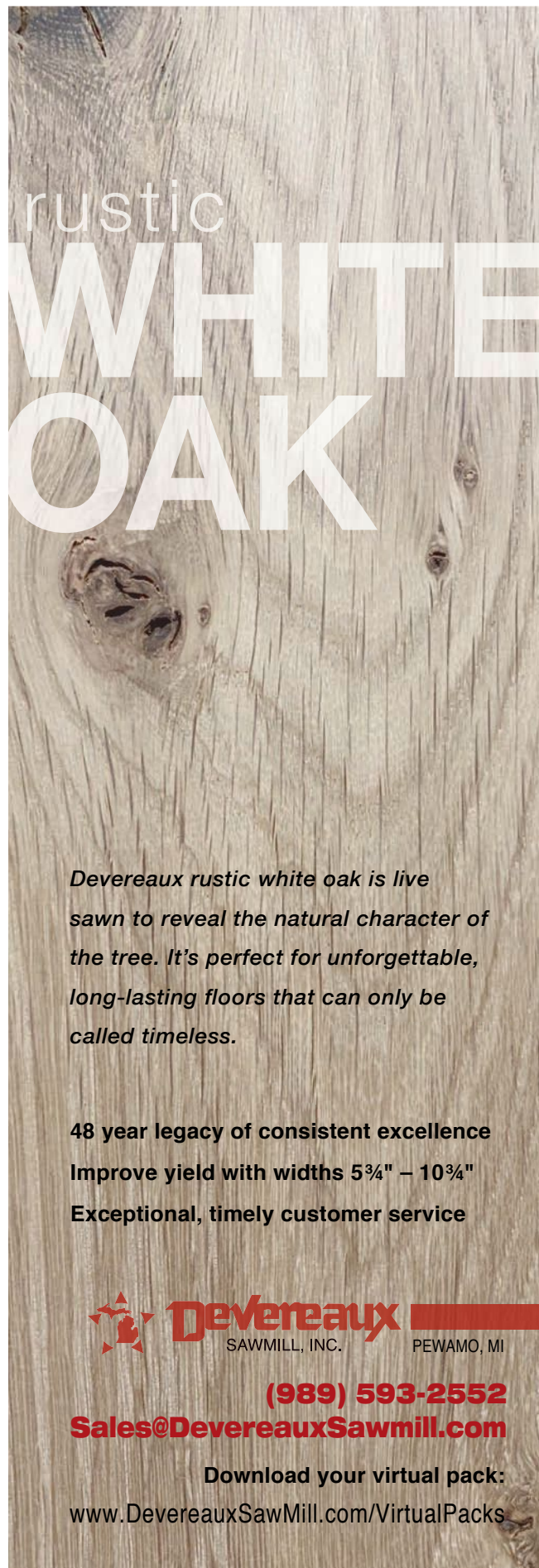
Both companies are driven by innovation and excellent customer service, according to Carbotech. They intend to embody those values more than ever under the governance of Carbotech as they work to enhance and adapt their range of products and services to meet the needs of the entire wood processing industry. Sylvain Magnan, one of Autolog's co-founders, is optimistic about this development: "The synergy between these companies is amazing. Together, we can take our expertise to the next level and offer our customers more than ever."

Carbotech Group's two offices will not be moving. Additionally, Autolog will continue to serve and work with its current customers and mechanical partners from its Blainville facility.

Carbotech Group's headquarters will remain in Plessisville and its team will continue to serve customers from around the world.

For more information, go to www.carbotech.ca.

Please turn the page



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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.

TRADE TALK

Continued



Lan McIlvain

MARCUS HOOK, PA—Alan

McIlvain Company, located here, recently installed a new Weinig Powermat 1500 moulder and a Thomas Manufacturing infeed handling system and bundle dumper/singulator.

The company's president, Lan McIlvain, commented that the new moulder allows for "very fast

changeovers" and can produce widths of up to 12-1/4 inches. Its 12,000 RPM capacity means it can "run quite a bit faster" than McIlvain's previous moulder. The new infeed device and bundle dumper helps with throughput, he stated. This new equipment helps now that the firm is producing more custom millwork, he said.

Alan McIlvain Company is 223 years old. This firm, close to Philadelphia, produces and distributes Hardwood lumber and custom mouldings and keeps over 7 million board feet of Hardwood and softwood in stock. Alan McIlvain Company handles Red and White Oak, Walnut, Hard and Soft Maple, Ash, Poplar, Hickory, Cherry, Basswood and, in softwood, white pine, Alaskan yellow cedar and cypress, plus imported lumber.

For more information, go to www.alanmcilvain.com.



The Sterling YieldBoss Hybrid Edger System

EAU CLAIRE, WI—McDonough Manufacturing Company, headquartered here, recently introduced the Sterling YieldBoss Hybrid Edger System, which, according to the company, is "a whole new class of edgers."



Matt Tietz

"The Sterling YieldBoss Hybrid Edger System is a revolutionary new approach to edging that combines the benefits of optimized saw placement with the simplicity of a manual edger system," said McDonough Vice President/Owner Matt Tietz. "An affordable system in a whole new class of edgers created

by McDonough, a Sterling YieldBoss Hybrid Edger fits in the space between our line of McDonough fully optimized edgers that return the highest yields, and manual edgers that leave everything up to your operator.

"Based on years of edger product development and site testing, a Hybrid Edger will deliver performance expected to be superior to many optimized transverse edger systems, and even outperform many edgers that are billed as being optimized, but in reality, are not."

The Sterling YieldBoss includes:

- Optimized saw placement on every board
- A design to fit the footprint of a hand-fed edger system common in sawmills everywhere
- A design to put the saw on the correct cut-path on every piece
- An infeed system based on the designs of the McDonough OptiFit edger system, which has been developed over years of testing and improvement, with 50-plus systems in operation around the industry

The standard YieldBoss edger system has:

- Edger infeed belt
- McDonough YieldBoss Hybrid Edger scanning
- McDonough Hybrid Edger system controls
- Two-saw McDonough YieldBoss edger

Please turn the page

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Front row, left to right: Marijo Wood, Sales Manager; Matt Hoover, Assistant Procurement Manager; Back row, left to right: Chris Hoover, Production Manager; Eric Hoover, Pallet, Cut-up Operations; Mike Hoover, Procurement Manager.

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TRADE TALK

Continued

•Edger outfeed belt

According to Tietz, "McDonough strives for efficiency through specialized machine solutions that lay a foundation for success. We focus on mutual honesty and long-term ethics, open and respectful communication, and are conscious of our customers' expectations. No matter your edger needs, McDonough has the system for you."

For more, visit www.mcdonough-mfg.com or call 715-834-7755.

NEWALD, WI—Cleereman Industries, headquartered



Paul Cleereman

here, recently performed this installation, according to Vice President Paul Cleereman:

At Mountain Timber of Hector, AR, Cleereman installed new Cleereman Carriage Controls on an existing Cleereman Carriage.

Since the unveiling of Cleereman's new edger line at the Richmond Expo, several edger orders have been taken. Cleereman Controls had a sawyers cab set up with carriage controls at the Richmond Expo with which customers could simulate cutting up a log. "This was a big hit at the show, and we took several carriage controls orders," stated Paul Cleereman. "With lumber markets being strong, business continues to be very good for both Cleereman Industries and Cleereman Controls."

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

- Manufacture high quality products built for high production, increased yield and years of trouble-free operations.
- Use simple yet highly functional designs to minimize the number of moving parts while maximizing the

performance and functionality.

- Provide unequaled service and support to its customers.

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QUEBEC *Continued from page 61*

34 percent (-18 percentage points from last April), while 21 percent have concerns for the overall viability of their shops (-11 percentage points from last April). Conversely, there is a slight uptick in worries over the availability of inventory/materials to 19 percent, up seven percentage points from April 2020.

Many business owners have implemented a number of changes to manage through the pandemic and into the future. A quarter (26 percent) have undertaken health and safety measures beyond legislative requirements, while a similar number (25 percent) have increased their online presence and 21 percent have introduced new payment technologies. Almost a third (29 percent) reduced operating expenses to get through the crisis while 20 percent had to dip into savings.

Main ambitions moving forward are to grow their business (34 percent), go from surviving to thriving (32 percent), remain operational (29 percent) and develop new revenue sources (25 percent). ■

NEWS DEVELOPMENTS *Continued from page 65*

NAHB SEEKS EXPANSION OF HOUSING SUPPLY

National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) CEO Jerry Howard testified before Congress recently and called on lawmakers to enact key policy proposals that will help home builders to expand the housing supply, reduce the housing deficit and improve housing affordability for all Americans.

Please turn the page

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NHLA

NEWS DEVELOPMENTS *Continued*

During a hearing before the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Oversight on the topic of expanding housing access to all Americans, Howard noted that rising home prices, apartment rents and construction costs represent additional risks to housing affordability for prospective home buyers and renters.

"Over the past decade, the residential construction industry has underbuilt and not kept pace with demand due to several supply-side constraints," said Howard. "These include a lack of skilled labor and buildable lots, tight lending conditions, shortages and rapidly rising prices for building materials, and excessive regulatory burdens that have added approximately 25 percent to the cost of a single-family home and 33 percent to a multifamily unit. Progress must be made on all fronts to ease the supply-side challenges that are holding back housing production."

With the persistent lack of housing stock representing the most significant challenge for prospective home buyers, Howard called on Congress and the Biden administration to take the following steps to expand access to affordable housing:

- Fix the building materials supply chain.** The United States must immediately engage with Canada to adopt a new softwood lumber agreement and stop the imposition of harmful tariffs on Canadian lumber that increase prices and price volatility.

- Improve the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.** Congress needs to enact H.R. 2573, the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act.

- Reformulate current homeownership tax incentives.** Recent tax changes have undermined the effectiveness of the mortgage interest deduction.

For more information, go to www.nahb.org. ■

HMA *Continued from page 16*

"The North Carolina Forest Service operates a system of nine Educational State Forests (ESFs) designed to teach the public - especially school children - about the forest environment. These Hardwood sample kits will be used as teaching aids during our educational programs. Thank you so much!"

A 50-word reminder blurb about *The American Hardwoods Collection*, included in the summer newsletter of the New York Chapter of the International Furnishings and Design Association (IFDA) - the "voice" of the furnishings and design industry - has resulted

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in nearly 20 sample kit requests from members of the design/build community looking to enhance their projects by including American Hardwoods in their designs.

If you would like to add **The American Hardwoods Collection** to your marketing tool belt, or if you feel that your state's Forestry Bureau would benefit from this information, email your request to Info@hardwood.org. After all, it's all about networking and collaboration, right? Hope to hear from you. ■

AHEC *Continued from page 18*

empty containers, has broken every chain of the logistics system."

- Due to port congestion, "in May alone about 67,000 40' containers were not unloaded on east coast ports that were scheduled. June is 15% higher."

- "Over 300 vessels right now, worldwide, are waiting for a berth. Each day costs \$125,000 per vessel just to sit."

- Vessel schedule changes, i.e. ocean bookings that are changed overnight, as MANY of us in the Hardwood business are experiencing, "...are caused by shipping lines making quick but calculated decisions; do we anchor offshore in line another 10 days or sail to your next port of call where wait time is less? That overnight change to weigh anchor and sail to another port to unload translates to canceled or rolled bookings."

As unsettling as this is, we hope this information helps clarify the landscape so that we can make the day-to-day decisions best for our companies, with an eye on what is good for the Hardwood industry long term. Certainly, you have guiding principals that already got you this far. I like asking these simple questions; What's the problem? What's not the problem (that is distracting us)? What are we going to do about it? In the big picture, perhaps the problem is "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times..." ■



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- Queuing Hooks (2) after Scanner
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- USNR 4TA30 Edger with 200 HP Arbor Drive Motor
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To: Anyone involved in the sawmill controls industry

There are many stories and people that have been involved in the sawmill controls industry.

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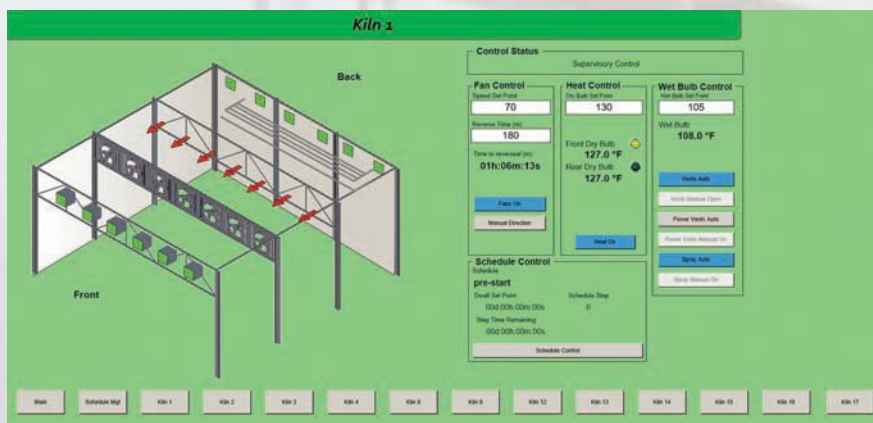
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