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American Hardwoods in Building Applications

In a recent posting to www.americanhardwood.org entitled, “Looking Good, Feeling Strong - Timber has a new cast of Performers,” David Venables, AHEC Director/Europe, discussed the use of American hardwoods in structural applications. In the article, Venables said:

- “For decades, our choice of wood species for timber construction has often been determined by price, rather than performance. But times are changing, and so are the products and construction techniques available to engineers who want to build in timber.
- In London, at a recent meeting of the European structural committee responsible for updating Eurocode 5 for timber, there was clear acknowledgement that more use of hardwoods will be an important element of future development of timber construction, and that new codes and standards need to reflect this.
- Until recently, almost all the raw material focus has been on softwood, as it provides a cheap source of fiber that offers good strength performance relative to its weight and cost, and will continue to do so. However, the possibility of using certain hardwood species to enhance the appearance and performance of timber structures is an exciting, new development being welcomed by architects and engineers.
- Glulam has been around for a long time – the first applications in Germany go back nearly a hundred years. But now we have Laminated Veneer Lumber (LVL) and Cross Laminated Timber (CLT). The latter, undoubtedly a game changer, has helped propel large-scale timber construction from the drawing board to the construction site, where it is now increasingly being considered as a first choice option over concrete and steel.”

Bottom Line: ‘Looking Good, Feeling Strong - Timber has a new cast of Performers.’ Hardwoods for structural applications “have arrived and are here to stay.”

For a review of AHEC’s landmark projects using white oak, red oak, ash, tulipwood and other species, please visit www.americanhardwood.org.