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Global Promotion and Innovative Uses of American Hardwood

At HMA's National Conference and Expo in Charleston, industry associate and American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) Executive Director, Mike Snow, took the microphone and provided an informative update regarding AHEC's global promotional efforts. Here is a synopsis of how AHEC is "growing the global pie" for American Hardwood.

Finding new markets

Industry networking – connecting sellers with potential buyers + educating the specifying community on grades, species, and sustainability – is an integral step to growing new markets. Learning of and leveraging information about projects using American hardwood in innovative ways creates awareness and greatly amplifies the hardwood message. Additionally, AHEC's collaboration with numerous architectural firms has resulted in an array of unique projects like – **The Butler, Along the Lines of Happiness, Out of the Woods** - that tout hardwood's variety and versatility, and most especially promotes the utilization of typically 'underused' species. (Visit www.americanhardwood.org to learn more.)

New Technologies = New Applications

The process of **thermal modification** has created a niche market for American ash, tulipwood, and other hardwood, offering it as an environmentally friendly alternative to chemically processed softwood or exotics in exterior applications. Again, AHEC's collaboration with worldwide architectural firms has resulted in key projects – **The Infinity Bench, Room on a Hill, Disney Store in Beijing, Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations in Marseille** – that are spotlighting the material. Over the next several years, the performance of the material will be monitored and duly reported. (www.americanhardwood.org)

Timber in Construction – AHEC funded research has proven the viability of cross-laminated hardwood for structural uses - see the [Endless Stair](#) and [The Smile](#) projects - transforming "the way architects and engineers approach timber construction;" opening the doors for hardwood CLT in 'real' commercial use; and creating a great opportunity for huge volumes of low grade tulipwood and yellow poplar. **Maggie's Center – Oldham, UK**, the world's first permanent building using tulipwood CLT, is being constructed, spotlighting the strength-to-weight-ratio of the renewable resource, and touting its advantages over concrete and steel. (The project also is using thermally modified ash for the exterior cladding.)

Capitalizing on Green Credentials

American Hardwoods have a powerful message to share, and one that is supported by much scientific research and documentation.

- They are legally harvested - "The Assessment of Lawful Harvesting & Sustainability of U.S. Hardwood Exports, commissioned by AHEC from Seneca Creek Associates, demonstrates there is less than a 1% risk of any illegal wood entering the U.S. hardwood supply chain."
- They are sustainable - "The U.S. [Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis \(FIA\) Program](#) shows that between 1953 and 2012, the volume of U.S. hardwood growing stock increased over 130 percent."
- They have low environmental impact - "On-going scientific Life Cycle Assessment work shows that the carbon stored in American hardwood, at point of delivery to any country in the world, almost always exceeds the carbon emissions associated with extraction, processing and transport."
- An on-line system is available that allows U.S. hardwood exporters to provide a comprehensive [American Hardwood Environmental Profile \(AHEP\)](#) with every individual consignment of product delivered to any market in the world.

Before ending his presentation, Snow directed attendees to several other online tools. "[American Hardwood Forest Explorer](#) provides detailed information on hardwood forest volume, growth and harvest at state and county levels throughout the United States. And [American Hardwood Environmental Profiler](#) is an interactive tool providing environmental impact data such as carbon footprint, forest replenishment time, acidification, and eutrophication for different species, lumber thicknesses and transport scenarios."