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RAHC Update Presented at Conference in Austin

During HMA's National Conference and Expo in Austin, industry stakeholders were provided an 'update' on the progress of the Real American Hardwood Coalition (RAHC), the industry led, sector-wide, domestic Initiative working to drive consumers to choose Real American Hardwood products.

On the dais for the 45-minute business session were Troy Brown, HMA President and member of the RAHC Advisory Council, and Hardwood Association Executives, Linda Jovanovich, Hardwood Manufacturers Association, Dana Lee Cole, Hardwood Federation; and Tom Inman, Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc.

Linda Jovanovich's comments ...

Included a brief recap of the Coalition's beginnings, plus information on the significant findings of an extensive consumer research initiative – the critical foundation needed to develop a successful consumer promotion campaign and Phase I of the Coalition's work - which identified that **consumer awareness and buy-in of our hardwood products must occur early in the decision-making process**. To make that happen, hardwood must be visible and available everywhere.

Dana Lee Cole's presentation ...

Highlighted the first steps of the Marketing Campaign i.e. creating the tools, available to all industry stakeholders, needed to drive consumer demand - RAH logo and branding activities and products; social media development; paid search; media relations, and the launch of RealAmericanHardwood.org, the website where all industry stakeholders can download the RAH logo and usage guidelines; follow the progress of the Coalition; get on board with voluntary funding, etc.

In Wrap-up, Tom Inman focused on 'next steps:'

- The completion and launch of a consumer-oriented website where homeowners, renovators, builders, contractors and designers will go to learn more about the beauty, durability and overall attributes of hardwood products; how to use those unique products, and how they contribute to creating a safe and healthy home/work environment.
- Distribution of in-store promotional materials and activities
- Social media influencer partnerships
- Web and print advertising

Inman concluded the session by encouraging attendees to spread the word to their industry counterparts and to get involved! "We're building something big to secure the future of the hardwood industry," he said. "And that will take greater industry participation and increased funding. Get on board!"

The entire presentation, "Real American Hardwood Coalition Update," is available in the Members Only section of www.HMAmembers.org. And those wishing to make a voluntary contribution to the RAHC consumer promotion campaign may do so by logging on to RealAmericanHardwood.org.

