

The Link

Newsletter | August 2023



A Message from HMA's President

by Tommy Petzoldt
President, HMA



As we move into mid-summer, I'm thankful for the joys that come with this season of sun-filled days and lemonade-cooling nights, family vacations, backyard cookouts, and time to spend with the kids on break from school. These moments are all the more special, after a long week of work and the challenges that just keep coming.

Extreme weather—wet or dry, hot or cold—brings unique struggles, along with impacts on log inventories. Slower lumber sales result in full warehouses. Labor shortages affect production goals. Skyrocketing operation costs influence everyday purchasing decisions. These and so many other issues continue to impact our industry and occupy our thoughts. And I know you're feeling it, too.

Nonetheless, the hardwood lumber industry has always been resilient. And I've found that as I discuss business challenges with other HMA members and industry colleagues, the conversations typically end with optimism, reminding me that our industry has peaks and valleys, and that in the midst of challenge, opportunity could be just ahead.

I call that the power of "positive speak," and the never-ending value and significance of the HMA community! And speaking of value...

HMA members will soon have a great opportunity to meet up with and learn from industry associates at HMA's Fall Regional Meeting, September 19-20 in St. Marys, Pennsylvania. We'll be touring Bradford Forest Products, Emporium Hardwoods, RAM Forest Products, Inc., and St. Marys Lumber Company, all HMA member companies and all ready, willing, and able to discuss how they are responding to their business challenges. Don't let this opportunity pass you by. Plan to join us in Pennsylvania.

The Meeting specifics are detailed in this issue of *The Link*, so please keep reading. And until I see you in September, all the best and enjoy the rest of your summer.



Planning to Attend HMA's Fall Regional?

If so, here's what you need to do!

- **August 2** is the deadline to secure your room at the Holiday Inn Express & Suites St. Marys (195 Comfort Lane, St. Marys, PA 15857). The "special" rate of \$170/night is available until August 2. Subsequent reservations will be confirmed on a space-available basis, at prevailing rates. To reserve your room call **814.834.2030** or [click here](#). And use code: HMA.
- Online registration for all HMA members, Promotion Contributors, and 2023 National Conference Sponsors and Exhibitors is up and running at HMAmembers.org. Don't be left out. Finalize your registration today!

And for those planning to travel by air, please note these airport options and driving distances to St. Marys.

- University Park Airport (SCE), State College, Pennsylvania | 1 hour, 36 min
- Elmira Corning Regional Airport (ELM), Horseheads, New York | 2 hours, 38 min
- Pittsburgh International Airport (PIT), Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania | 2 hours, 45 min

Tour Locations for 'Keystone State' Fall Meeting

HMA is heading to Pennsylvania, September 19–20, and you'll not want to miss this line-up of tour locations in the Keystone State.

In 1925, Joe Rossi began producing lumber, railroad ties and firewood for the central Connecticut marketplace. Nearly a century later, **Rossi Group** locations in Connecticut and Pennsylvania have extensive sorting, milling and drying capabilities, with unlimited access to one hundred thousand acres of the finest hardwood forests in America.

ROSSIGROUP

- **Bradford Forest Products**, Bradford, Pennsylvania, part of the Rossi Group since 2021, specializes in high-quality cherry, hard and soft maple, red and white oak, and ash.
- **Emporium Hardwoods**, Emporium, Pennsylvania, is a state-of-the-art operation touting two double cut slant head-rigs, two band re-saws, and a sorting line with 37 automated bays to ensure a maximum range of sizes and grades before stacking and kiln drying.

A manufacturer and exporter of quality Pennsylvania Hardwoods, and specializing in ash, red oak, hard maple, soft maple and cherry, **RAM Forest Products, Inc.**,

Shinglehouse, Pennsylvania, has been an HMA member since 1987, and a longtime contributor to HMA's education/promotion campaign. Tucked away in the northwestern corner of Potter County, AKA "God's Country," this is HMA's first visit to RAM, and we're looking forward to the experience!



With five production facilities located in the Northern Appalachian Mountains of Pennsylvania, **Bingaman & Son Lumber** prides itself in producing kiln-dried lumber, strips, dimensions, glulam curtain wall meams, thermally-modified lumber, and much more.

St. Marys Lumber Co., St. Marys, Pennsylvania, specializing in black cherry, ash, soft maple, and poplar, joined the Bingaman family of businesses in 2006, establishing a direct link to the vast timber resource in the Allegheny National Forest region.



Regional Sponsorships for the Taking

Looking for a fast and easy way to differentiate your company from the rest of the field? Sign on as a Regional Meeting Sponsor, and HMA will handle the rest.

- A \$1000 Sponsor could co-host Tuesday's Bus Transportation to the tour sites, Tuesday's Lunch, or Tuesday's Cocktail Reception. (This sponsorship includes a complimentary Registration valued at \$275.)
- A \$500 Sponsor could host the Registration Gift Bags or Tuesday's Bus Refreshments.

To thank you for your show of extra support, HMA will "spotlight" your company in *The Link* and *Mid-Month Update* newsletters, at HMAmembers.org, and on social media. Contact us, info@hardwood.org or **412.215.9256**, to get the ball rolling.



2023 NatCon Sessions “In Review”

Strategic Solutions for Your Operations

For the final session of NatCon 2023, representatives of two trusted industry suppliers, TS Manufacturing and USNR, took center stage to discuss automated technologies being developed and offered to the hardwood industry.



Product Development Manager **Bob Arnold** presented USNR's automated hardwood lumber grading system, which reduces the subjectivity and variability associated with manual grading, and also speeds up the grading process, improving overall efficiency and productivity.

- It is an extremely accurate vision and geometry scanner powered by artificial intelligence with deep learning in conjunction with USNR's customizable MillExpert NHLA optimization.
- Adaptable to all wood types and most species, and smart enough to ignore board markings and artifacts that do not affect grade, the USNR hardwood grader is already a proven performer in the hardwood industry in both green and dry mill applications.

TS Manufacturing Sales Manager, **Riley Smith**, discussed the company's Hardwood Lumber Stacking and Robotic Sorting technology.



Yes, hardwood auto grading is here, but hardwood mills still have challenges that softwood mills do not:

- Stacking challenges: stick placement, mixed lengths, random widths, appearance/presentation packing
- Reliance on 'semi-manual' labor and the challenge of hiring and keeping those employees.

Bottom Line: Our industry is on the road to greater performance and efficiency with technology. And the challenges are being addressed via historical learning.

Audio files and PowerPoint presentations of all NatCon 2023 business sessions are available in the Members Only section of HMAmembers.org. Tune in!

NTC Offering Hardwood Certificate Program



The Northcentral Technical College (NTC) is again offering its **Hardwood Manufacturers Certificate program**. Scheduled for fall 2023, the 16-week certificate prepares learners for fast growing, in-demand positions within the hardwood manufacturing industry. Classes are taught in person and utilize NTC's 27,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art Wood Technology Center of Excellence in Antigo, Wisconsin.

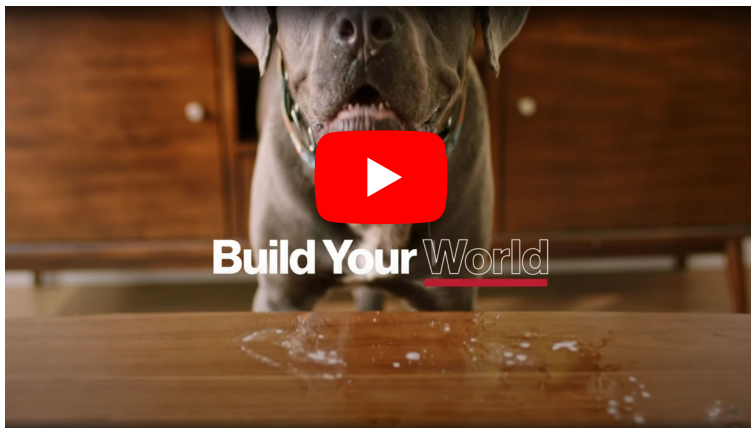
Upon completion, graduates will be able to:

- Scale, grade, and value hardwood logs
- Inspect hardwood lumber applying NHLA grading rules
- Breakdown logs, edge and trim lumber, to maximize profits
- Investigate slicer and rotary veneer manufacturing
- Examine the physical and mechanical properties of wood
- Operate a conventional dry kiln
- Identify hardwood species

Questions about this program should be directed to Career Coaches at **715.803.1645**.

RAHC Launches Build Your World Campaign in Partnership with Magnolia Network

The Real American Hardwood Coalition (RAHC), the domestic hardwood industry's consumer promotion initiative, officially launched its new Build Your World™ advertising campaign to promote Real American Hardwood® flooring, cabinetry, furniture, and millwork. In partnership with Magnolia Network, the integrated digital campaign will run through January 29, 2024, and will reach 93 million people.



"An advertising campaign on this scale is a first for the American hardwood industry," says Michael Martin, president and CEO of the National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA). "For decades, misinformation has spread and the industry has seen market share slip away to alternative products that offer the wood look, without any of the benefits of real wood. Through the Build Your World campaign, our industry is showing how Real American Hardwood products offer unmatched aesthetics, natural durability, and lasting value—as well as why they are healthier for our homes and environment. And Magnolia Network is the perfect partner to share these stories."

Developed by CANVAS United, the campaign relates the authenticity and attributes of Real American Hardwood products to the uniqueness and lifestyles of consumers. Five different vignettes capture the spirit of individuality in real-life settings, encouraging consumers to envision how they can build their world with hardwood.

"As long-time partners to the RAHC, we're excited to see the Build Your World campaign launch. We're particularly proud of this campaign's capacity to highlight both the emotional and rational benefits of hardwood," said Mark Lainas, president of CANVAS United. "Leveraging entertaining yet poignant storytelling in the creative will feel relatable to consumers across the country, and allows us to showcase not just the beauty of American hardwoods, but the lasting value of the products."

The ad campaign will run on the Magnolia Network channel, as well as on Magnolia and discovery+ digital streaming platforms. Magnolia Network is available through cable and satellite providers; Hulu + Live TV and YouTube TV services; and Magnolia, HGTV, discovery+, and Max streaming apps. The campaign also includes digital and social media components.

To learn more about the Build Your World campaign and see the campaign's landing page, visit RealAmericanHardwood.com/build-your-world.

This campaign was made possible thanks to the voluntary support of the hardwood industry—up and down the supply chain. Thank you to the more than 130 companies, nearly 30 trade associations, and individual donors who have contributed toward the success of the Real American Hardwood initiative. Visit RealAmericanHardwood.com/industry to see a listing of contributors.

The RAHC's work is ongoing, and now that the Build Your World campaign is up and running, efforts will continue to promote Real American Hardwood products to consumers, and also will shift focus to begin outreach and education toward the design/build community.

To achieve the RAHC's ambitious goals, funding is a critical component. The time is now to Build Your World. Consider making a voluntary contribution, today, at RealAmericanHardwood.com/industry.



Real American Hardwood Social Updates From July

by Ian Faight

Marketing, Communications, and Digital Content Director, HMA | Digital Community Manager, RAHC

The Real American Hardwood Coalition (RAHC) continued promoting hardwood products on social media by relating them to everyday life. Following is a brief review of post from July.



Going Crazy Over Cherry

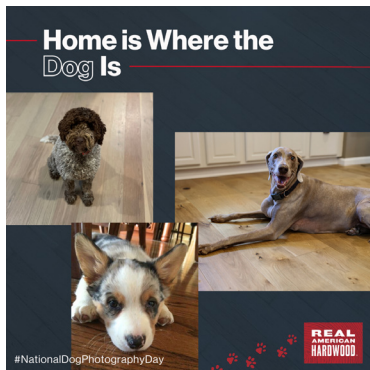
In mid-July, the RAHC shined the spotlight on cherry trees. A series of educational posts shared facts on the different types of cherry trees, where they grow, their fruit, their health benefits, and a tasty iced tea recipe.

View the posts on [Instagram](#).

Sharing Pup Pics and Tips

July 26 marked National Dog Photography Day and the RAHC shared a series of cute pup pics, floor care and maintenance tips, and health benefits of real wood floors. In addition, followers were encouraged to share photos of their dogs.

See the post on [Facebook](#).



Adding Flavor Like a Pit Boss





National Grilling Month was celebrated in July. And whether you prefer to grill, bbq, or smoke, adding Real American Hardwood pellets, chips, chunks, charcoal, or logs can add delicious flavor to meats, seafood, and veggies.

To close out the month, the RAHC shared a video with BBQ pitmasters who discussed what hardwood they use, as well as the flavor nuances of different hardwood species.

Watch the video on [Instagram](#).



Follow Along

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-  @RealAmericanHardwood
-  @RealAmericanHwd
-  @RealAmericanHardwood



Getting a Sneak Peek at 2024 Color Trends

Pulling inspiration from fashion, technology, art and popular movements," paint manufacturer Dunn-Edwards has released its forecast of *Color + Design Trends for 2024*. A collection of 48 hues combining misty, ethereal midtones, quirky brights, and strong earth colors, the four inspired color palettes project a sense of confidence and optimism, coziness, romance, escapism, and youthfulness. Inspired by nature and bringing cottage life into daily routines, the hues pop with "optimism" and encourage "a future of unlimited possibility." See all 48 at dunnedwards.com.

But not so fast, there's still plenty of 2023 left for design pros to shine. Home renovation and design site Houzz has identified a selection of emerging midyear design trends that reflect a desire to create new living areas and improve existing spaces to better fit current and future lifestyles. Visit [Houzz.com](https://houzz.com) for a close look at its *35 Home Design Trends on the Rise in 2023*. You'll find a lot of American hardwoods.



Hardwood Federation Industry Tidbits

by Dana Lee Cole

Executive Director, Hardwood Federation



August 15 application deadline for USDA "REAP" Grants

USDA is accepting applications for the **Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)** Technical Assistance Grant Program. (Companies deploying biomass heat and power systems have previously benefited from grants authorized by REAP.)

- Grants will range from \$100,000 to \$500,000.
- Eligible applicants, which include sole proprietorships, not-for-profit groups, among others, will cover activities that help "agricultural producers or rural small businesses to apply for assistance under REAP for energy efficiency improvements, or renewable energy systems."
- USDA will accept applications through August 15.

USFS Webinar on Mature, Old Growth Forest "Threat Analysis"

In mid-July, hardwood team members participated in USFS's webinar on developing a "threat analysis" for mature and old growth forests and weighing factors such as wildfire, insect, and disease risk. After expressing our concerns that the exercise would result in further erosion of active forest management and arguing that timber harvest and forest thinning, for example, "do not constitute threats" to federal lands, USFS officials responded that the agency is charged with forest management as part of its core mission and is therefore not likely to cut back on forest management unless Congress directs it to do so through legislation. They also stated that the "threat analysis framework" would be finalized in the winter of 2023 and 2024.



Lawmakers' "To Do" List Sets Up Legislative Logjam

Confronting lawmakers is the September 30th expiration deadlines of the Fiscal Year 2024 budget and the 2018 Farm Bill. While few are predicting that Congress will reach a budget deal by the September deadline, Farm Bill leaders are expressing confidence that USDA programs, including those that fall under the umbrella of the USFS, will continue on a business-as-usual basis, even if the 2023 Farm Bill fails to cross the finish line. Senate Ag Committee Chair Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) has stated that in the event Congress doesn't close a deal by the end of September, there is bipartisan consensus to pass a "continuing resolution" on the current legislation.

As you contact your elected officials, echo our key "asks" driven home during the Federation's June Fly-In:

- **Farm Bill** | Congress must establish a grant program educating the public about the benefits of hardwood products, especially recognition of the carbon capture value of hardwood products.
- **Transportation** | Congress must pass a "supply chain package" that creates flexibility for truck weights, grows the dwindling pool of trucker drivers, and expedites implementation of ocean shipping reforms.
- **Taxes** | Congress must make permanent 100% expensing of industrial equipment and the 20% deduction for small business. Congress should also restore full deductibility of business expenses.

Business Community Aligns with Industry on ESA Expansion

In late July, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce conducted a coalition meeting to review environmental policy challenges facing the business community and spotlighted recent proposals by the Administration to expand the scope of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and focused on two specific initiatives being addressed by the Federation: the USFWS proposal to ban consideration of economic impacts when reviewing ESA designations; and reinstatement of a "blanket rule," which extends almost identical control measures to species classified as "endangered" as those listed as "threatened." The Federation is drafting comments on the proposals, which are due August 21. Stand by.

Manufacturing Day Set for October 6

MFG Day is an initiative of the Manufacturing Institute, celebrated nationally on the first Friday in October, and is recognized as manufacturing's biggest annual opportunity to inspire the next generation; positively shift perceptions, and build the foundation for the manufacturing workforce of the future. How could MFG Day assist YOU?

By hosting an MFG Day event, you are opening the doors of your operations and showing community leaders, teachers, parents, and students the career opportunities available in the hardwood industry in general, and within your operation, specifically.

Sounds promising, but not sure how to begin? Not to worry. MFG Day **webinars** are just a click away.

And these **resources** will provide you with valuable information to help plan and prepare for your MFG Day event. Don't waste another minute.



**MFG
DAY**

Host an **MFG Day** Event!

#MFGDay23

Keeping Cool in the Summer Heat

If high temps and even higher AC bills are cramping your style this summer, take a look at these "cooling" tips offered by Chidinma Nwakanma, professor of emergency medicine at Penn Medicine in Philadelphia. (And reach for a fan!)



Evaporative Cooling | Sit by a fan and with a spray bottle, spritz water in the air between you and the fan. This is the fastest way to cool yourself down and is used on patients with heat stroke.

Fan Placement | To circulate fresh air in a shaded room, position a fan near an open window and aim it into the room. In sun-filled rooms, turn the fan around—or reverse the blade rotation—so it will blow hot air out.

For a More Comfortable Sleep | Before bedtime, take a cool shower and use a peppermint soap or gel. Plus, consider cotton sleepwear, over synthetics, and opt for sheets with a lower thread count, preferably 200–400.

Summer Eating | Foods with high water content—leafy greens, melons, oranges, pineapples—are cooling. Spicy foods can also help because they contain capsaicin, which jump-starts your natural coolant: sweat.

Source: AARP The Magazine, June/July 2023



The Link is published each month exclusively for members of the Hardwood Manufacturers Association. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the HMA; HMA staff welcomes comments and questions.

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