

The Link

Newsletter | February 2024



The Road Ahead

by Ian Faight
Chief Operating Officer, HMA



Blink! January is already in the rearview mirror, and it's full steam ahead toward NatCon 2024 in Charleston, South Carolina, March 25–27. Linda and I hope to see you there at The Charleston Place for HMA's signature event. And as a reminder, NatCon is open to all industry stakeholders—members, non-members, and suppliers.

If you haven't already registered to attend or booked your hotel room, time is of the essence and I encourage you to take care of business ASAP. Registration fees increase on March 1, but luckily, it's a leap year and February is providing an extra day. And while our hotel block has already filled up once, we were able to add a limited number of additional rooms—but when they're gone, they're gone.

I'm happy to report that our Expo booths are completely sold out. Thank you to all the vendors who signed up for booth space. I look forward to stopping by and checking in with you in Charleston.

I'd also like to thank the companies that signed on as NatCon sponsors. HMA truly appreciates your support in making our event the talk of Charleston!

With a full Expo, our Monday and Tuesday receptions are sure to provide excellent networking opportunities to mix, mingle, and share knowledge with industry colleagues—old and new.

We're also pleased to welcome members of the Southern Cypress Manufacturers Association for their 2024 Annual Meeting, as well as the Fellowship of Christian Lumbermen.

Lastly, keep your calendars clear for mid-June 2024 and HMA's Spring Regional in Central Tennessee. More details will be hitting your inbox soon.

That's all for now.

Last Call for Industry Suppliers

Booths are sold out for the Expo portion of NatCon 2024, but there's still an opportunity to walk the Expo floor. Sign on as a **Strolling Supplier**, and stroll into all the events and meet with potential customers.

Seal the deal by emailing info@hardwood.org.

Hardwood Federation Announces 2024 Fly-In Dates

The Hardwood Federation's 2024 Fly-In is scheduled for **Tuesday–Thursday, May 21–23**. Save the dates and come to Washington to make your voice heard on Capitol Hill! Stay tuned for details related to registration information and Fly-In agenda.



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Does Your Pathway Lead to Charleston?

HMA's 2024 National Conference & Expo at The Charleston Place in Charleston, South Carolina, is shaping up to be an informative and memorable event. And we hope you're planning to join us, **Monday-Wednesday, March 25-27**, for in-demand learning sessions; sold out exhibit space; and the industry's best networking opportunities. Here's a rundown of what you need to know.

Register Today and Save

Registration is available online at HMAmembers.org.

- **HMA Members & Promotion Contributors | \$650**
- **SCMA Members | \$650**
- **Non-Members | \$800**

And as a reminder, rates increase by 10% on March 1.

Book Your Room Before They're Gone

The Charleston Place is nearing capacity and a limited number of rooms were added to our block at a discounted rate of \$350/night. Reservations can be made **online** or by calling **800.611.5545**, and mention the Hardwood Manufacturers Association. Don't delay, be sure to book your stay today.

Schedule at a Glance

HMA asked it's membership what topics were important to them, and we're delivering. This year's theme is **Pathways to Success** and our slate of learning sessions is geared toward helping your company navigate volatile markets, economic uncertainty, and other challenges ahead.

- **2024 Hardwood Industry Outlook**
Hear from industry experts on a range of topics, including forecasts on pallets, railway ties, and residuals, as well as gain insights into the U.S. forest inventory and analysis, and the battle against misleading claims from alternative products.

■ Funding Improvements: Grant Opportunities

What is the USDA Forest Service's Wood Innovations Grant (WIG) Program? How can a grant help your company make equipment and operational upgrades? What companies are eligible? How do you apply for a grant? Marcus Taylor, Wood Innovations coordinator for the Southern Region, will be with us to provide all the details and answer questions.

■ Effective Communication Panel

Times have changed and communicating with workers from different generations can be challenging and frustrating for all involved. This panel discussion, moderated by Steve James—president and CEO of Frank Miller Lumber Company and a certified John C. Maxwell coach, trainer, and speaker—will bring together three generations to candidly discuss collaboration, stereotypes surrounding different age groups, and why generational spread is a strength, not a weakness in the workplace.

■ Sawmilling in the Pacific Northwest

Go on a virtual tour of NWH's facility in Longview, Washington, to get a close-up look at their operations, and soar high above an alder forest while learning about this beautiful yet underutilized species. Bus snacks and refreshments provided!

■ Economic Predictions: Hits and Misses

This year, we're welcoming back our 2023 presenter, Dr. Christopher Kuehl, co-founder of Armada Corporate Intelligence. His presentation will give an honest critique of his assessment last year, as well as a current look at the U.S. economy and a forward-looking analysis of trends to watch.

NatCon Sponsorships Up for Grabs

Looking for an easy—and affordable—way to stand out from the crowd at NatCon? Sign up to sponsor breakfast, lunch, or a reception; get in every attendee's hand by providing hotel keycard folders or advertising in the Events Guide; or help offset the costs of snacks and swag bag amenities.

Visit HMAmembers.org to see what's available, then email info@hardwood.org to secure your selection.

And to show our thanks for your extra support, HMA will spotlight your company leading up to and during the event in Charleston, in *The Link* and *Mid-Month Update* newsletters, on social media, and all year long at HMAmembers.org.

Thank you to our sponsors listed below.



Sponsors as of February 2, 2024

Golfing for Fun—or Bragging Rights—in Charleston

Space is limited for HMA's second annual NatCon Golf Tournament, which will take place at Patriots Point Links, on **Monday, March 25**. Tee times begin at 9 am. Golfers are responsible for their own transportation.

The cost is \$130 and includes golf cart rental. Limited sets of rental clubs are available for \$75+ tax. Register online at HMAmembers.org.

A number of sponsorship opportunities also are available. Funds raised will be donated to the Real American Hardwood Coalition in support of their promotion and education initiative. And remember, you can be a sponsor even if you're not golfing.

Questions? Email golf organizer Peter McCarty at PeterM@tsman.com.



Staying Social with Real American Hardwood

by Ian Faight

Chief Operating Officer, HMA | Digital Community Manager, RAHC

Kicking off the new year, the Real American Hardwood Coalition (RAHC) took to social media to inspire and educate homeowners. A series of posts showcased hardwood projects, care and maintenance tips, and the story of a small business. Following is a brief recap.

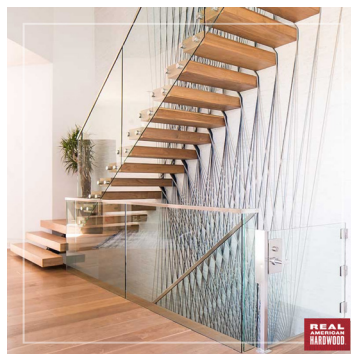
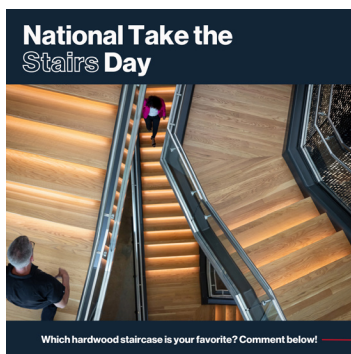


An Award-Winning Look
Continuing its Hardwood Makeover series, the RAHC highlighted a gorgeous flooring installation by Four Board Woodworks in Louisville, Kentucky. Crafted from 6,500 square feet of American ash in a mix of herringbone, straight-lay wide plank, and custom parquet applications. To

finish it off, the floor was wire-brushed by hand before each board was coated with a reactive stain and a custom color blend. See the post on [Instagram](#).

Stepping Up Design

Did you know January 10 marked National Take the Stairs Day? Well now you do! The RAHC posted photos of several striking staircases with elevated designs and posed a question to its followers: Which staircase is your favorite? See the post on [Instagram](#).



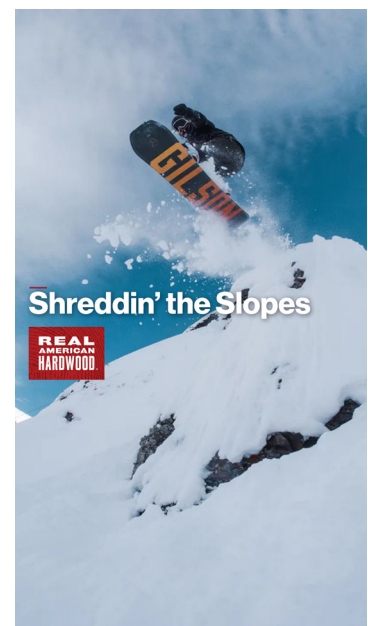
Helpful Tips for Homeowners

Owning a home is a major investment and an even bigger responsibility. January 19 was Own Your Own Home Day and the RAHC shared a number of tips for homeowners to keep their Real American Hardwood flooring, furniture, cabinetry, and millwork looking and performing their best. See the post on [Instagram](#).



Getting Gnarly on the Slopes

The winter months are for hitting the slopes and carving up fresh powder. To spotlight winter recreation and equipment, the RAHC partnered with Gilson Snow, a leading snowboard and ski manufacturer based in Winfield, Pennsylvania, to share the company's story. A brief video explored why Gilson crafts their snowboards and skis from locally sourced and sustainably harvested poplar, revealed responsible manufacturing techniques, and explained the carbon sequestration benefits of trees. Watch the video on [Instagram](#).



Hardwood Federation Industry Tidbits

by Dana Lee Cole

Executive Director, Hardwood Federation



Support the Hardwood Access and Development Program Act

The Hardwood Federation–crafted Hardwood Products Access and Development Program Act was assigned the bill number H.R. 6880. Now it's your turn to help promote the bill in our efforts to recruit bipartisan Congressional support.

Join more than 130 of your industry colleagues who have already sent letters to their House lawmakers urging them to sign onto the hardwood access bill. You can support the industry by contacting your U.S. representative today and sending a [letter](#) urging more co-sponsors for H.R. 6880.

House Passes Tax Package, Sends to Senate

On January 31, and after much negotiation with members of his own GOP Caucus, House Speaker Johnson (R-LA) moved forward with a bipartisan vote on the House tax package, which passed under expedited procedures requiring a 2/3 majority vote to bypass the amendment process. The bill includes restoration of business interest deductions, the R&D tax credit, and full expensing of equipment. Timing in the Senate remains uncertain at this time.

EPA Poised to Release Stringent Air Quality Standard, Industry Prepares Remedies

Anticipating the release of a stringent air quality standard for PM 2.5, aka "fine particulate matter" from EPA, industry is bracing itself for a significant increase in the number of "non-attainment" counties nationwide that will have to look at costly pollution abatement measures to achieve compliance. In addition to planning litigation that could delay implementation of the new standard, industry groups will examine legislative remedies that would hamstring EPA's ability to implement a new rule during the next fiscal year. Although a new rule would primarily impact large facilities in the wood products sector, there could be downstream impacts—up to \$900 million in compliance costs—for smaller operations and manufacturers.

Farm Bill Timing Remains a Moving Target

Many factors are converging to create even more uncertainty related to progress on the farm bill this year. Although House Ag Committee Chair GT Thompson (R-PA) has talked about bringing a bill to the Ag Committee in March, the protracted funding measures now running through March 1 and March 8, per the two-tiered Continuing Resolution (CR) passed in late 2023, threaten to push other legislative priorities, including the farm bill, further up the calendar. Then there's the price tag attached to the massive bill—which could run as high as \$1.5 trillion—that will cause many House Republicans to dig in on issues such as nutrition assistance and other costly items, causing a possible stalemate with Senate negotiators.

A Boost to Red Oak in Military Vehicles

The General Services Administration (GSA), an agency charged with delivering support services such as transportation across the federal government, has issued a notice designating red oak as the material of choice for floorboards and cargo beds in military vehicles. The boost for hardwoods arrived in the form of a [Commercial Item Description](#) (CID) titled "Hardwood: Floorboards for Military Vehicles, Trailers, & Platforms." The goal of the CID is to replace hardwoods sourced from endangered tropical forests with northern red oak, which the agency characterizes as having "the least concern for extinction."

USFS Proposes to Amend Land Management Plans

Near the end of 2023, the USFS released a [notice](#) stating its intent to amend all land management plans in an attempt to maximize conservation of old growth forests. The latest agency action ignores industry [comments](#) submitted in 2023, urging federal regulators to avoid treatment of old growth and mature forests in a manner that undermines forest management. The Federation is reviewing details related to the proposal and exploring submission of joint comments to be signed by a broad spectrum of forest products industry groups.

**D.C.
Cheat Sheet**

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Sign Up for the D.C. Cheat Sheet

Are you looking for weekly information on these issues and others impacting the U.S. hardwood industry? Subscribe to the Hardwood Federation's [D.C. Cheat Sheet](#).

Going Blond: How to Use Light-toned Wood in Your Home

They say blonds have more fun, but there are non-frivolous reasons for choosing light-finished hardwoods for floors, cabinetry, paneling, and millwork in your home. "Many species of Real American Hardwood®—white oak, maple, birch, ash, poplar, beech, and sycamore among them—are naturally blond," notes Linda Jovanovich of the American Hardwood Information Center. "These pale-toned woods create bright and airy residential spaces that readily adapt to the homeowner's preferred style of décor, from the comfortably traditional to the boldly contemporary." More than just a collection of pretty faces, they all share hardwood's well-known durability, flexibility, and sustainability—qualities that make it an ideal material for use in today's Instagram-ready interiors.

Read more about how architects and designers are utilizing blond Real American Hardwood in homes on the [American Hardwood Information Center](#).



Photo by Life Created



Photo by Virginia Hamrick



Photo by Adam Kane Macchia



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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