

# The Link

Newsletter | July 2022



## More Than Just Talk

by Linda Jovanovich  
Executive Vice President, HMA



The heat is on! And I'm not talking summer temps. I'm talking American hardwood promotion! And it's all good!

As you know, the Real American Hardwood Coalition (RAHC) was launched in 2019 as an industry association-led effort to secure the future of the hardwood industry by increasing domestic markets and sales of Real American Hardwood™ products. HMA is a founding member of the RAHC. I'm honored to serve

as its Treasurer. And Ian Faight, HMA's marketing, communications and digital content director, produces and maintains all the RAHC's social media platforms. Other association executives also continue to graciously contribute their time and talents. And to date, much has been accomplished.

Within the next several weeks, [RealAmericanHardwood.com](https://RealAmericanHardwood.com), the initiative's all-important, consumer-facing website, will go live. Be sure to visit the site. The phenomenal work was done by CANVAS United, a digital agency that's famous for its expertise in brand development. And when you see how they've actualized our hardwood messaging pillars—Appearance, Durability, Lifetime Value, Healthy Home, and Sustainability—you'll understand why CANVAS United is so highly regarded.

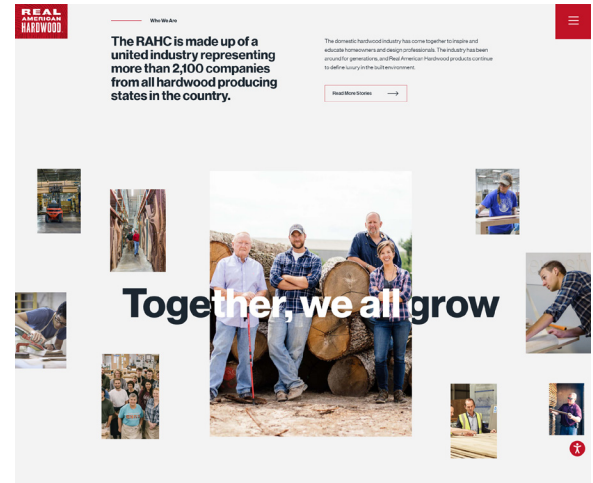
The launch of the consumer website was a critical milestone in the furtherance of the RAHC's mission. And to all that have stepped to the plate with your financial support, thank you for recognizing the importance of the program—and for helping to get it to this point.

To those who've been 'unsure' or 'hesitant' of supporting the RAHC, I'm hopeful that the completion of [RealAmericanHardwood.com](https://RealAmericanHardwood.com) will put to rest all reluctance in supporting the effort. Much more lies ahead for this exciting initiative. Meeting future milestones, however, will require sustainable funding from all industry stakeholders.

If it takes a village to raise a child, it will take an industry—that's each and every one of us—to implement and sustain this much needed program. To add your financial support, visit [RealAmericanHardwood.org](https://RealAmericanHardwood.org).

*Linda*

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## Fall Regional Meeting Set for October

Wednesday–Thursday, October 19–20 are the dates for **HMA's Fall Regional Meeting**, and we're heading to Missouri—the "Show-Me State"—home to Tommy Petzoldt, HMA's current president. To date, confirmed tours include **East Perry Lumber Company**, **HAVCO Wood Products**, a manufacturer of oak truck floors, and **McGinnis Wood Products, Inc.**, a family-owned cooperage and stave mill.

There also will be a Board of Directors Meeting on Tuesday, October 18, 2 pm, at our hotel.

Additional Tour information, Meeting Registration and Hotel details will be forthcoming. Plan on participating.



## HMA Membership Drive is On

And we're asking YOU to spread the good news to your hardwood colleagues that are currently not members of the HMA. Give them a call. Talk with them about our unique and storied Association. Your personal testimony as to why HMA membership is important to you and your business is the information that will ring true with them.

### HMA will Help

**Click here** to access/download the HMA Membership Benefits handout sheet. It's a great reference tool to aid you with your "sales pitch."



### What's the Incentive for the "Prospective" Member?

As HMA membership dues are based on reported annual production, new members will enjoy a 50% dues reduction for the first six (6) months of their membership. And they'll also receive one (1) complimentary 2023 meeting registration to experience an HMA event, first-hand!

### What's in it for You?

Bring a new member on board, and you too will receive one (1) complimentary 2023 meeting registration. (As prices continue to soar, that ain't hay!) And you'll also have your choice of an HMA identified jacket, golf shirt, or visor—often referred to as "HMA swag!"

Let's grow the HMA together, for the benefit of us ALL.





## NextGen Leaders Council Update

Lots of exciting projects are in the works for HMA's NextGen Leaders Council. Topping the list of what's new: congratulations go out to recently named Council coordinator, Jim Howard, Chief Executive Officer of Atlanta Hardwood Corporation. Jim reports that the Council will be kicking off their "new year" of activities at the International Woodworking Fair in Atlanta, slated for August.

As a memory refresher, the purpose of HMA's NextGen Leaders Council is to engage the next generation of leadership in HMA member companies and the industry, and to seek their input as to how the HMA can better serve the professional development of future leaders.

During their three-year term, Council members:

- Must be willing and available to work on various HMA sponsored projects to help further develop each Council member, and to offer insight and recommendations on improvements for the HMA.
- Are encouraged to participate in HMA Board of Directors meetings, as well as Hardwood Federation Fly-Ins, in order to become familiar with all aspects of the HMA and to gain insight into industry issues.



## Celebrating Father's Day with American Hardwoods and Dad Jokes

by Ian Faight

*Marketing, Communications, and Digital Content Director, HMA*

In June, the American Hardwood Information Center hosted a giveaway on Instagram in collaboration with **Siroh & Ivy**, a talented woodworking duo from HMA's neck of the woods in Western Pennsylvania.

Winners also received a thank you note that encouraged them to unfold some fun facts about the American hardwoods that were used to craft their new coasters. [Click here](#) to scroll through them.



With Father's Day occurring during the month, the giveaway targeted people who were looking for a timely gift for their dad, grandfather, or father figure. To enter, people were asked to follow @american\_hardwoods and @sirohandivy, like the post, tag three friends, and leave a comment with their favorite "dad joke."

Three lucky winners were randomly selected. And the gift? HMA and Siroh & Ivy chose a set of six maple and walnut coasters engraved with "dad jokes" (submitted by giveaway entrants) and a custom whiskey glass etched with the American Hardwoods logo.



### What was Involved?

As part of the partnership, HMA covered the material costs, Siroh & Ivy supplied the labor, and we promoted it together—including a series of posts and relatable videos that documented the process of creating the one-of-a-kind coasters.

### The Results?

Our goals were to reach more people and gain new followers, which we were able to do in a week:

- 37,912 impressions
- 56 followers gained
- 239 content interactions
- 3 happy dads

And along the way, HMA and Siroh & Ivy also were able to increase engagement on posts, educate consumers on the benefits of choosing hardwoods, show how "real" products are made from natural materials, inspire future purchase decisions, and promote a small business that works with hardwood.

### Considering a Giveaway?

Partnering with a local woodworker would be a great way for your company to be more active on social media, engage with your audience, and grow your following. And HMA is here to help. Email [ian@hardwood.org](mailto:ian@hardwood.org) to get the log rolling.

## NatCon Presentation “Briefs”

Visit “Members Only” at [HMAmembers.org](https://HMAmembers.org) to revisit all the presentations from our 2022 National Conference and Expo in their entirety.

Investing  
in the Future



## “Automation & Robotics: The Future of Wood Processing Technology”

Wood processing technologies are no longer a wish or a dream. They’re real. And in his NatCon ‘22 presentation, Simon Potvin, president of Wood

Processing for the BID Group, discussed the solutions already in play that can help your facilities achieve their best overall performance.



- Artificial intelligence (AI) solutions are already revolutionizing hardwood grading.
- Robotic applications of lumber handling—stacking of regular/variable width boards—are removing dangerous manual tasks.
- Connected systems across the mill are increasing efficiency by maximizing equipment and personnel performances.
- “As all sectors of the wood industry face similar sustainability, profitability and labor challenges, now is the time to work smarter, not harder. There is always a better way.”

## “Driving Forces Behind the Decision to Automate”

If you think automation is not for your business, you’ll want to drop what you’re doing and tune in to the 15-minute NatCon ‘22 presentation by Liz Russell, director of operations at HMA member company Stella-Jones Corporation. Two processes at their Wisconsin Tie Treating facility were automated, and the results were stellar.

Automate to lessen labor quantity/quality issues; reduce safety concerns; experience production gains? What’s there to think about?

- The automation of the pre-plating process resulted in fewer ergonomic injuries, improved employee morale/turn-over, and a more consistent and higher quality product.
- After updating their grading and trimming processes, implementing a robot to stack ties heading to the air dry yard resulted in a smaller work crew, increased productivity and production capacity, and increased market share.



## Hardwood Federation Update

by Dana Lee Cole  
Executive Director, Hardwood Federation



### Ocean Shipping Reform Crosses the Finish Line!

As predicted, in mid-June, Congress voted for final passage of the "Ocean Shipping Reform Act" when the House approved the final bill with an overwhelming majority. On June 16, President Biden signed the bill at the White House, making the law official.

The bill is notable for the strong bipartisan support it received in both the House and Senate. The Hardwood Federation Political Action Committee is proud to have supported all the bill's main sponsors: Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN); Senator John Thune (R-SD); Representative John Garamendi (D-CA); and Representative Dusty Johnson (R-SD).

And the Hardwood Federation will continue engaging in next steps related to the law's implementation, especially as it relates to upcoming federal guidelines that will prevent an ocean carrier from refusing cargo—including hardwood products—for export.

### House Lawmakers Introduce "Bat Bill," Promote Forest Management

On June 16, Representatives Bruce Westerman (R-AR) and Pete Stauber (R-MN) introduced the "Endangered Species Flexibility Act"—also known as the "Bat Bill"—that would create common-sense guard rails around the scope of endangered species regulations. The bill would prevent an "uplisting" of the Northern Long Eared Bat (NLEB) from "threatened" to "endangered"—a step that would shut down logging in most of the continental U.S. The bill also would shore up the HF's advocacy and **comments** on the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's proposed rule to re-designate the NLEB as "endangered," triggering a variety of land-use restrictions that would hinder the industry.

### USDA Puts Industry Priorities into Writing

Also in June, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack signed an Executive Memo, titled "Climate Resilience and Carbon Stewardship of America's National Forests and Grasslands." In the document, USDA noted they fully recognize:

- The need to harvest federal forest lands to sustain forest health and prevent extreme wildfires;
- The importance of forest products to forest-based solutions to carbon in the atmosphere; and
- The need to employ science-based decision making in developing and implementing policies to promote climate resilience.

The memo also confirms USDA's commitment to protecting old growth and mature forest lands (while acknowledging that the vast majority are already protected under current regulations and rules), and fighting wildfires, as well as wildlife and watershed protection and conservation. The Hardwood Federation will be analyzing the full text of the memo to assess the potential impacts on the U.S. hardwood industry. Read the USDA announcement [here](#).



## D.C. Cheat Sheet



## Sign Up for the D.C. Cheat Sheet

Are you interested in learning more about the goings-on in our nation's capital? Sign up for the **D.C. Cheat Sheet** and receive updates from the Hardwood Federation in your inbox on Thursdays.

[Click here](#) to sign up.



## Certificate Program Enrollment Deadline Fast Approaching

If you are looking for employee training opportunities specific to the hardwood industry, HMA's partner in education, the Northcentral Technical College (NTC), is offering its **Hardwood Manufacturers Certificate Program**, August 29–November 18. And all hardwood industry stakeholders are welcome to participate.

Geared to assist in the training of our hardwood industry "newbies," the 12-week program will be conducted at NTC's 27,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art Wood Technology Center of Excellence in Antigo, Wisconsin, and training topics include hardwood species identification, uses, and markets; hardwood veneer and plywood production; physical and mechanical properties of wood; reducing machining defects in wood products, and steps to reduce product failure from wood movement.

The application deadline is August 12. And all of the program details—curriculum, cost, housing, application process—are available at [ntc.edu](https://ntc.edu).



## The Science of Silence



In early May, the "C-Suite Strategies" section of *The Wall Street Journal* included an insightful article, titled "How to Use Silence in Meetings" by Heidi Mitchell. It discussed "the science of silence," and how "pausing at the right moment can

be a powerful tool." If you missed it, you may find the following article highlights helpful.

- Research shows that people can use silence to their advantage. Pausing at strategic times gives statements more weight and lets people fully absorb them, giving them the space they need to come up with creative ideas in response.

- Silence before you speak can be a powerful strategy, but silence after you speak also can be effective. Ask listeners to take a moment to reflect on what's been said. This gives them a chance to take in your words—and process your emotions. Useful dialogue and honest questions can arise from such a pregnant pause.
- Staying silent doesn't just give people a chance to reflect. Staying silent for a few beats after someone in a higher status position speaks, can be a powerful way to convey that you're paying respectful attention.
- Also consider silence as: a powerful way to signal when someone steps out of line, a useful alternative when confrontation won't work in the moment, and to make a person know that they are breaching a norm.

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