

# The Link

Newsletter | July 2023



## More Than Just Talk

by Linda Jovanovich  
Executive Vice President, HMA



I recently took a call from a new HMA member who said he wanted to talk with me about his experience at our Spring Regional Meeting in Lexington. Trying to place a face with a name, I held my breath for a moment, wondering how this call was going to go, and all the while thinking, he's new to the HMA; this was his first Regional Meeting; was I able to spend much quality time with him in Lexington? Yada, yada, yada. Thankfully, my jitters were soon put to rest.

He was calling to thank the HMA, and me, for presenting him with such a wonderful opportunity to see, to experience, and to learn. He said that for him, each tour location provided a significant take-away. He told me that during the 36-hour event, he made HMA and vendor connections that have already proven to be beneficial to his work. And he's already marked his calendar for the September Regional, anticipating the same "return" on his time investment.

This was music to my ears. And his willingness to invest the time and money to attend reinforces what I continue to believe is true, that for those who choose to participate, the value of HMA's Regional Meetings is real.

And so, we've set our Fall Regional for September 18–20 in St. Marys, Pennsylvania, and I ask all of you to make every effort to participate in this "members only" event. This issue of *The Link* includes to-date specifics, confirmed tours, etc. And as additional meeting details are finalized, you'll find everything at [HMAmembers.org](https://HMAmembers.org).

September in Pennsylvania is beautiful, take it from me! Until then, enjoy these lazy, hazy days of summer. And I hope to cross paths with you, soon.



## Fall Regional Meeting Plans are in the Works

September 18–20 are the dates for HMA's Fall Regional Meeting, and we're heading to St. Marys, in the beautiful state of Pennsylvania—famous for its rolling hills, picturesque farms, dense forests and some of the most beautiful landscapes our country has to offer.

Confirmed tours include **Bradford Forest Products**, **Emporium Hardwoods**, **RAM Forest Products**, and **St. Marys Lumber Co.** And the Holiday Inn Express & Suites St. Marys (195 Comfort Lane, St. Mary's, PA 15857) will serve as our base of operations. Join us!

Online meeting registration, hotel details, and sponsorship opportunities will soon be available at [HMAmembers.org](https://HMAmembers.org). So, clear your calendar and plan on participating.

Also, an HMA Board of Directors Meeting will take place during the Fall Regional Meeting. Set to convene on Monday, September 18, HMA members arriving early may attend, but participation is reserved exclusively for HMA Officers and Board members.

## 2023 NatCon Sessions “In Review”

Audio files and PowerPoint presentations of all NatCon 2023 business sessions are available in the Members Only section of [HMAmembers.org](https://HMAmembers.org). Tune in!

### Recap of “Hardwood Exports in a Turbulent World”



In his presentation at NatCon 2023, American Hardwood Export Council Executive Director Michael Snow informed attendees that for American Hardwoods on the global market, the “roller coaster ride continues.” Below are some of his talking points.

- Yes, China is still the world’s largest hardwood lumber importer. However, questions abound as to China’s direction, as it struggles with geopolitics over economics, increasing debt, a housing crisis, and the country’s demographic “timebomb.”
- Anticipate “effects” of “Nearshoring and Friendshoring” approaches to managing global supply chain issues.
- Top markets outside of China include: Canada, Vietnam, Mexico, the United Kingdom, Japan, Europe, Thailand, Indonesia, and South Korea—but not without concerns.
- American hardwood lumber exports to Australia and New Zealand decreased last year in both volume and value due to unfavorable exchange rates, economic uncertainty, and supply issues.
- Emerging markets for hardwood lumber include India, with its significant population growth, the Middle East and North Africa.

Snow concluded his presentation with information regarding the need for a Sustainable Hardwood Certification program to ensure that U.S. hardwoods are universally recognized in international markets, and which responds to sustainability challenges specific to the U.S. hardwood sector.

### Recap of “Strategic Solutions for Your Operations”



Your business success rests on your shoulders. And every decision you make has an implication on your insurance renewal. In her presentation, ***Your Insurance Renewal: a Year-Long Process***, Lindsey DiGangi, assistant vice president of Marketing, the ***Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual***

***Insurance Company***, discussed some of the key insurance and risk management considerations that are essential for what matters to you, your employees, and your business.

- Complete a Business Income Worksheet, NOW!
- Understand what you need BEFORE a claim occurs.
- Create a Business Continuity Guide/Plan
- Make Risk Mitigation a Priority!

Is there game changing technology that can take your operation to the next level? **MICROTEC’s** Norvin Laudon thinks so, and he showcased that technology in his panel presentation, ***CT Log Scanning in Hardwood***.



- Traditional hardwood mills break the log down using grade sawing techniques, with scanners making opening face decisions, and sawyers making the rest of the sawing decisions. Without being able to see inside the log, optimal value and volume cannot be achieved manually.
- Microtec’s CT Log Scanner is able to see all of the defects inside of the log before sawing, particularly knots and stains. When coupled with Microtec’s Logeye 900 Stereo Headrig Scanner, the system is able to fully optimize the log and execute the pattern on the headrig.
- This technology is game changing for the hardwood industry, resulting both in much higher volumes and increased grade value.

Solution-based machinery and equipment is what **RPM** (Real Performance Machinery) is all about. In his panel presentation, Daniel Gravely, chief business development officer, RPM, discussed upgrades for profiling and curbsaw gangs, and the easy and ongoing maintenance systems RPM has developed for its customers, specifically ***HOTT (Hanging Over The Top) Technology***.



- A complete primary and secondary breakdown solution
- With all critical components above the cutting tools and debris
- The entire line fits within 20 feet
- Results include: increased grade recovery; the highest Line speeds on the Market; improved overall mill flow

Out-of-the-box, divergent thinking leads to novel ideas and game changing technology.

## RealAmericanHardwood.com Earns Web Excellence Awards

The Real American Hardwood Coalition (RAHC) recently announced that its website, [RealAmericanHardwood.com](https://RealAmericanHardwood.com), earned three Excellence Awards—in the *Lifestyle, Services + Utilities*, and *Sustainability* categories—from the Web Excellence Awards program, a global competition that recognizes the best of the best in web design and development.

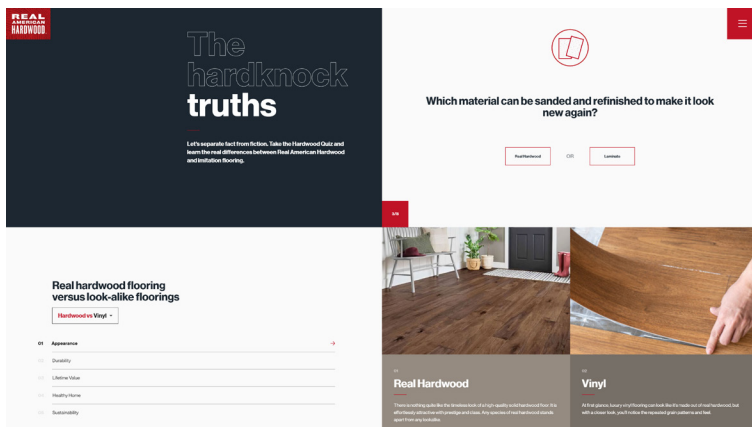
On behalf of the Real American Hardwood Coalition, Michael Martin, president and CEO of the National Wood Flooring Association, and a RAHC Board member, said, “We set out to develop a website that helps homeowners envision their world built with Real American Hardwood® products and empowers them to make informed decisions by separating fact from fiction when it comes to real wood. These honors highlight our work, and the entire industry can be proud of the website and these achievements.”



With more than 1,350 entries from 39 countries, submissions were judged on their innovation, creativity, implementation, and impact, and the winners were chosen by a panel of marketing gurus, advertisers, communications specialists, and web design experts.

Designed by CANVAS United, RealAmericanHardwood.com educates consumers and the design/build community on the advantages and benefits of Real American Hardwood products, and explores how hardwood is influencing lifestyles and culture in the modern world. Engaging interactive modules compare the appearance, durability, value, home health, and environmental attributes of real wood products to faux, wood-look alternatives. And the site also serves as a hub for project ideas, maintenance tips, and environmental facts.

To read the release in its entirety, visit [RealAmericanHardwood.com/industry](https://RealAmericanHardwood.com/industry).





## Sharing Our Industry's Stories on Social Media

by Ian Faight

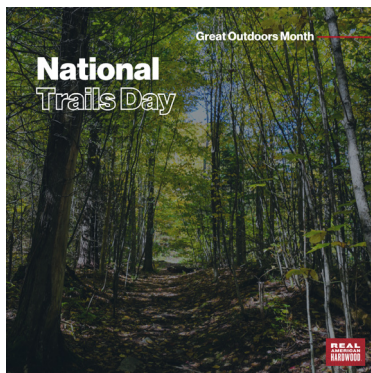
Marketing, Communications, and Digital Content Director, HMA | Digital Community Manager, RAHC

Are you following the Real American Hardwood Coalition (RAHC) on social media? If not, consider this your invitation to follow along. You'll find beautiful project ideas, as well as stories from all aspects of our industry. Following are brief recaps of posts from June that you may have missed.



### Going Nuts Over Hazelnuts

National Hazelnut Cake Day kicked off the month of June, and the RAHC took the opportunity to educate followers on hazel trees, a sub-species of birch. The post shared interesting tree facts and why incorporating more hazelnuts into your diet is a healthy idea. View the post on [Instagram](#).



### Enjoying Nature

The month of June happens to be National Great Outdoors Month, and the RAHC encouraged followers to get outside, breathe in fresh air, see some trees, and enjoy nature! And on June 3, the RAHC suggested people take a hike for National Trails Day.

### Celebrating the Stars and Stripes

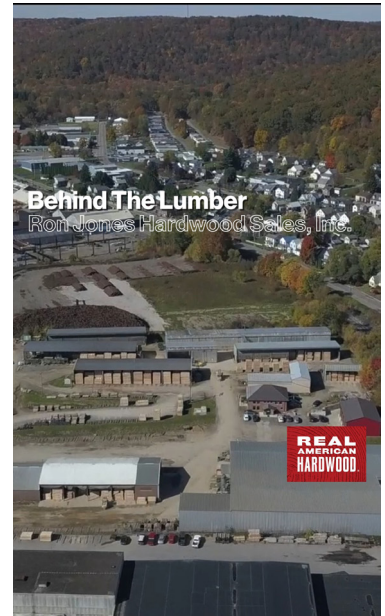


Flag Day is celebrated on June 14 each year, and in honor of "Old Glory," the RAHC shared photos of American flags crafted from Real American Hardwood boards. The pieces of art were handmade using recycled and reclaimed materials from flooring production and retired pallets. See the photos on [Instagram](#).

### Keeping Up with the Joneses

There's no shortage of family businesses in our industry, and the RAHC has an ongoing video series highlighting them.

For National Family Owned & Operated Businesses Day on June 23, the RAHC shared a video showcasing HMA member Ron Jones Hardwood Sales, Inc., based in Franklin, Pennsylvania. The video provided history on the third-generation company and showed some behind the scenes footage of their operations. Watch the video on [Instagram](#).



## Make a Real Impact

Visit [RealAmericanHardwood.com/industry](https://RealAmericanHardwood.com/industry) to learn more about the RAHC, read updates, and lend your support. Together, let's inspire a stylish and healthy environment by educating consumers on the many benefits of Real American Hardwood products.

 @RealAmericanHardwood

 @RealAmericanHardwood

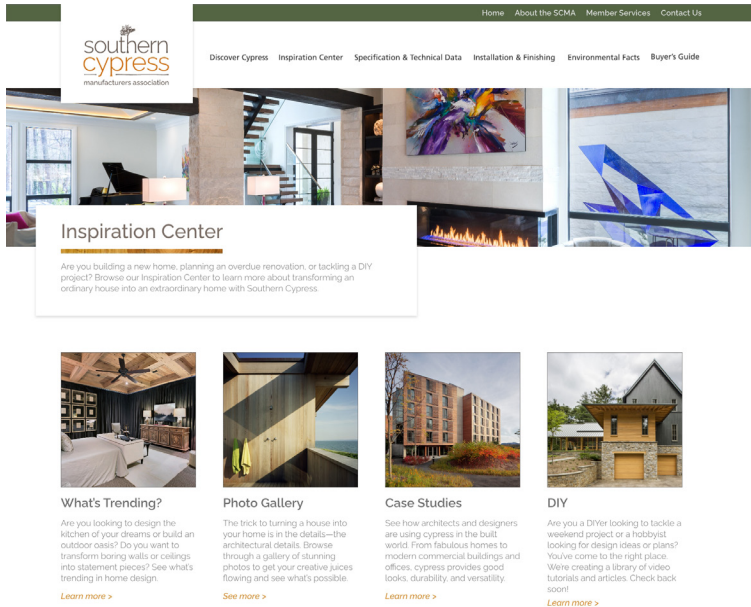
 @RealAmericanHwd

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## Did Someone Say, “SCMA?”

You bet they did! The word is out about the Southern Cypress Manufacturers Association’s (SCMA’s) redesigned and reimagined website, [CypressInfo.org](https://CypressInfo.org). And you’re doing yourself a disservice if you haven’t checked it out.



- In the Inspiration Center, you’ll see what’s trending in home design and décor, indoor/outdoor cypress applications, case studies of cypress in the “built” world, and DIY project inspiration.
- For builders, architects, and designers, the Specification and Technical Data tab provides grade rules, drying guidelines, engineering design values, span tables, and working properties.
- And the Installation and Finishing tab features decking and siding information, plus best practices for sealing, staining, and painting.

**Bottom Line:** The SCMA is dedicated to the promotion of cypress building products to design professionals and consumers. CypressInfo.org, a treasure trove of information for all things cypress, and other promotional activities—editorial features, trade media articles, show home projects, and an engaging social media campaign—enable SCMA to serve as the voice of the cypress industry and a reliable source of project inspiration and technical information. Visit [CypressInfo.org](https://CypressInfo.org) for more.

## 7 Coastal Cues for Your Home

Are you drawn to the seaside style of coastal design? If so, you’re going to want to check out the SCMA’s latest editorial feature, ***7 Coastal Cues for Your Home***. The article inspires homeowners to bring the beach vibes to their own home with seven striking design ideas celebrating the natural beauty of cypress.

The article, distributed through Brandpoint, has already received **1,000 online placements** and reached nearly **88M potential readers**.

Read the article at [CypressInfo.org](https://CypressInfo.org).

*Photos by Jack Gardner*





## Hardwood Federation Fly-In Kicks Off Summer

by Dana Lee Cole

*Executive Director, Hardwood Federation*



Following a three-year hiatus, June 14 and 15 marked the Federation Fly-In comeback. And I'm pleased to report that nearly 70 hardwood industry leaders—which included 10 association executives—visited Senate and House offices from 21 states in every region of the country, and conducted over 100 bipartisan, congressional meetings advocating for hardwood priorities.

Focusing on members of Congress who represent districts where industry members live and work, the hardwood team conducted more than 60 meetings with House lawmakers, and industry leaders also were able to deliver key messages to nearly half the U.S. Senate, racking up 40 meetings, including discussions with nine of the 21 members of the Senate Agriculture Committee—which is busy drafting its version of the farm legislation—and conversations in the offices of Agriculture Committee Chair Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Ranking Member John Boozman (R-AR).

### On the Policy Front

- The farm bill, which last passed in 2018 and is up for reauthorization, headlined this year's Fly-In. Advocates recommended recognition of the carbon capture value of hardwood products in federal accounting programs, inclusion of a hardwood products grant program to educate consumers about the sustainability of hardwood products, and doubling funding for USDA export promotion authority.
- Transportation policy was also a high priority, with participants advocating for a House Transportation Committee package that includes truck weight flexibility, streamlining the process for obtaining a Commercial Drivers License (CDL) and expediting implementation of ocean shipping reforms passed into law in 2022.
- On the tax policy front, advocates recommended permanence for 100% bonus depreciation and the Section 199A small business deduction.

Following Wednesday's Hill meetings, Fly-In participants headed to the Capitol Hill Club to thank House-side Republican industry friends with a social hour. During dinner, House Ag Committee Chair GT Thompson (R-PA) addressed the group and outlined a path forward for the farm bill, noting the importance of working together in a bipartisan fashion.

The Fly-In concluded on Thursday, June 15, with a breakfast reception, where attendees mingled with Democrat lawmakers who have a demonstrated track record of supporting our industry.

Thank you to all of the HMA members who were able to participate, including first-time participant and HMA NextGen Leaders Council member, Ian Faight, who when asked to give his impressions of the event, said, "It was a fantastic opportunity, not only to get face time with members of Congress to discuss issues facing our industry, but also to mix and mingle with industry colleagues. Thank you, Hardwood Federation team, for organizing such a great event and making arrangements for all who participated."



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**HARDWOOD**  
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## Hardwood CLT Research Update



Researchers at West Virginia University's (WVU) Appalachian Hardwood Center at the Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design, have been testing the effectiveness of yellow poplar, an abundant

West Virginia hardwood species, as a source of engineered wood building material. And according to a June article in *WVU Today*, titled "WVU Researchers Find Ways to Make Low-Quality Hardwoods Useful for Structural Applications," research conducted by Joseph McNeel, WVU professor and director of the Hardwood Center, and his team, shows that yellow poplar works well in structural applications.

- The team created CLT panels (Cross-laminated timbers) of three, five, and seven layers using a press that can apply 250 pounds of pressure per square inch.

- The researchers tested the panels' bending and breaking strength and subjected samples to harsh conditions like water saturation and dehydration.
- Tests were performed multiple times to see if the glue bonds held, and results indicated the panels will perform well in construction.
- The next step will be to get yellow poplar accepted as a permissible raw material by the American Panel Association. At that point, CLT manufacturing companies will be able to use yellow poplar CLTs in commercial construction."

According to McNeel, "Half of the hardwood harvested for sawtimber in West Virginia is considered low-quality lumber because it has too many knots and other defects. It's used for pallets, boxes, railroad ties, and flooring. But you can take those low-quality hardwoods and create something with significant added value."

Read the full article at [WVUToday.wvu.edu](https://www.wvu.edu/Today/2023/06/23/wvu-researchers-find-ways-to-make-low-quality-hardwoods-useful-for-structural-applications/).

## Looking for Information and Inspiration?

Then tune in to **The Manufacturing Executive**, a growth strategy podcast for manufacturing leaders, hosted by Joe Sullivan, founder of Gorilla 76, an industrial marketing and consulting group out of St. Louis, Missouri. Podcast topics include:

- What today's Manufacturing Workforce Wants
- The Changing Landscape for Manufacturing Ownership Transitions

And you'll also hear conversations with manufacturing leaders sharing stories about their successes and struggles, and interviews with B2B sales and marketing experts about what's working on the business development front, and how to make these ideas actionable. Give a listen.



*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.

### Hardwood Manufacturers Association

One Williamsburg Place, Suite 108  
Warrendale, PA 15086

**Phone** 412.244.0440  
**Web** [HMAmembers.org](https://HMAmembers.org)  
[HardwoodInfo.com](https://HardwoodInfo.com)

**Contact**  
[info@hardwood.org](mailto:info@hardwood.org)

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