

The Link

Newsletter | June 2023



More Than Just Talk

by Linda Jovanovich
Executive Vice President, HMA



Now that HMA's Spring Regional is in the 'completed' column, I say "Hello June! And let the summer begin!" But before donning my flipflops and sunscreen, I'd be remiss if I failed to thank the many people responsible for the success of HMA's recent meeting in Lexington. Without a doubt, it was an exceptional experience—from start to finish—filled with great people, eye opening tours, and a lot of industry

camaraderie—HMA-style! Enjoy some photos from our time in the Blue Grass state on the next page. And some "thank yous" are in order:

- Thank you to tour hosts: **BPM Lumber; Cumberland Cooperage; GreenTree Forest Products, Inc.; Somerset Pellet Fuel; and Kentucky Hardwood Lumber, Inc.** Your facilities were awesome.
- Thank you to our meeting sponsors: **Frank Miller Lumber, Koppers, and Merrick Hardwoods.** Your extra assistance, in support of the HMA, is greatly appreciated and helps make our tours a success.
- Thank you to guest speaker Bob Bauer, executive director of the **Kentucky Forest Industries Association**, to our participating HMA members, and to all industry associates, for making this Regional Meeting a priority. Please share what you experienced with your industry colleagues, and encourage them to be with us "next time," because "next time" will be upon us in the blink of an eye.

About "next time!" Details of HMA's Fall Regional will soon be heading your way, and I ask that you make every effort to attend. Mill managers, line supervisors, "NextGen" employees who have been demonstrating leadership qualities, and other key personnel will find the tours extremely beneficial.

Until we meet at the next industry gathering, enjoy the summer and remember, you can reach me at ljovanovich@hardwood.org.

Linda

Planning Call for 2024 National Conference & Expo

HMA's 2024 National Conference & Expo is set for March 25–27 at the Charleston Place Hotel, Charleston, South Carolina, and we're asking for your participation in a Conference Planning Call to provide input on potential **learning session topics** and **event themes**.

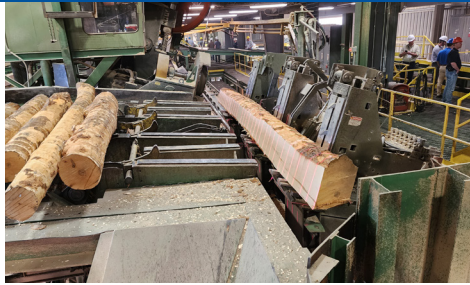
- The call on **Tuesday, June 27**, 10 am Eastern, will be a one-hour investment.
- Want to participate? Email Linda at ljovanovich@hardwood.org.
- When finalized, call-in specifics will be emailed to you.

Join the conversation and tell us what information would assist you in managing your businesses. Remember, HMA exists to benefit you. Your input matters!



Spring Regional Pictorial Wrap-Up

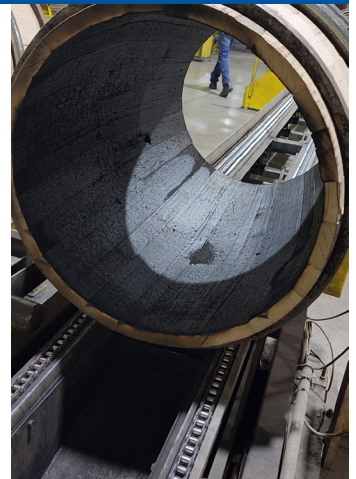
BPM Lumber | London, Kentucky



Somerset Pellet Fuel and Kentucky Hardwood Company, Inc. | Somerset, Kentucky



Robinson Stave Company and Cumberland Cooperage | East Bernstadt, Kentucky



GreenTree Forest Products, Inc. | Wallingford, Kentucky



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.

Recap of “Implementing Agents of Change with Effective Communications and Leadership”

Steve James, certified John C. Maxwell coach/trainer/speaker and CEO of Frank Miller Lumber Company, discussed effective leadership, the diversity in today’s workplace, and the importance of understanding what makes employees unique. Here are the highlights.

Leadership | Leading is influencing. The better the leader, the more effective the team will become. Employees quit leaders, not companies. So, value people. Be kind. Be respectful.

Workplace Diversity | Today’s workforce is comprised of multiple generations, each seeking something different from their work. Effective leaders will invest the time to understand and develop training and incentive programs for the enrichment of all.

Personality Traits | Personalities are shaped by heredity, role models, and environmental factors, and are typically a mixture of four central personality styles/traits often depicted by images of birds—dominance (Eagle), inducement/influence (Parrot/Peacock), submission (Dove), and compliance (Owl). Recognizing the behavioral style of employees will lead to better communication, teamwork, and an optimal company culture.

Recap of “Trends and Forecasts for the U.S. Domestic Economy”

Dr. Chris Kuehl, managing director, co-founder, and chief economist of Armada Corporate Intelligence, offered a wealth of economic insight for 2023 and beyond. Here is a mini recap.

Where Are We? | The corporate community remains upbeat. Labor market remains overheated, keeping consumer spending stable. Labor costs are a concern, with wages rising faster than at any time since the early 2000s. Unemployment remains low, which bodes well for 2023 and 2024.

The Concerns Going Forward? | Credit tightening is accelerating. Construction lending is tightening. Commercial loans (for all capital purposes) to large- and medium-sized firms are tightening. Inflation remains an issue. Unemployment is likely to creep up. Labor shortage remains an issue in many sectors. Housing activity remains split—with growth in multi-family, but single-family still struggles. Commercial construction, strong now, will likely slow in 2024.

Any Good News? | Reduced chances of a recession in 2023—a “slowdown” for sure, but not a full-blown recession! However, a bank crisis, and/or global “black swan” events—China, Taiwan, Korea, Russia, Ukraine, Latin American, global natural disasters, big layoffs, or other events of severe consequence—could send us in a different direction.

To stay informed, sign up for these trial subscriptions:

- **The Flagship Briefing**, published 3x/week covers domestic and global economics, geopolitics, raw materials, supply chain risks, and environmental and weather-related risks to operations. A free trial is available by emailing exec@armadaci.com.
- **Armada Strategic Intelligence System** is a forecasting intelligence tool for seven sectors of the manufacturing industry. A two-month trial is available at asisintelligence.com/free-trial.

Recap of “Let’s Talk Hardwood Promotion”

In 2019, with the goal to increase sales and improve industry stability by raising awareness of the benefits of Real American Hardwood® products, two dozen hardwood industry associations united to form the Real American Hardwood Coalition (RAHC). Today, work continues, and at NatCon 2023, attendees heard an update from **Michael Martin**, president and CEO of the National Wood Flooring Association.

Since Its Inception | The initiative is now supported by more than 200 associations, industry leaders, large corporations, small businesses, and individual donors. A promotion website is up and running at RealAmericanHardwood.com. An engaging and educational social media campaign has been successfully implemented with more than 3,000 followers—and growing daily.

The 2023 Game Plan | The RAHC is nearing launch of its Build Your World™ campaign, connecting the world to the benefits, beauty, and enduring value of American hardwoods for a sustainable future. It’s an effort that requires industry buy-in, partnerships and mass media exposure. In 2023, the RAHC and Magnolia Network will come together to entertain, educate, and inspire consumers and professionals to build their worlds with Real American Hardwood flooring, cabinetry, furniture, and millwork.

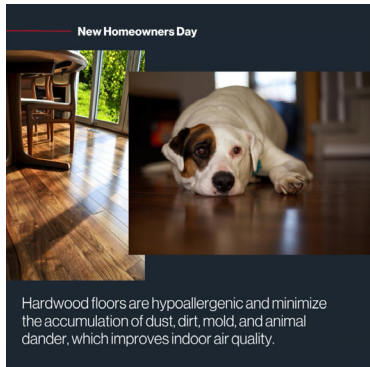
Next Steps | Continuing to increase hardwood promotion to the consumer, design, and construction audiences; expand industry stakeholder engagement; and increase funding. Hardwood promotion is everyone’s business.

Inspiring & Educating on Social Media

by Ian Faight

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

The Real American Hardwood Coalition (RAHC) has exciting news! Just two short months after reaching 2,000 followers on Instagram, the RAHC surpassed the 3,000 follower milestone. The rapid growth is largely due to recent posts that have been inspiring and educating consumers and the pros on a variety of topics. Keep reading for a rundown.



Educating Homeowners

Kicking off the month of May, the RAHC offered homeowners some advice on why Real American Hardwood® products are solid investments that increase home values; promote a healthy home; and improve mood, stress levels, and overall mental health. View the post on [Instagram](#).



Hardwood Imagined in a Galaxy Far, Far Away

For those in the know, Star Wars Day is celebrated on May 4 each year. The RAHC joined in on the "May the Fourth be with You" fun by recreating popular scenes from the franchise with Real American Hardwood floors.

View them on [Instagram](#).

Behind the Scenes with Path Design

Every tree—and the products made from it—tells a unique story. Adding to that story are the woodworkers who create beautiful wood products that we use every day.



In April/May, the RAHC collaborated with Path Design—a New Jersey-based woodworking duo—to share their story and what inspires their work.

The video also explores why they made the switch from working with basic construction grade lumber to building Real American Hardwood furniture. View the video on [Instagram](#).

Inspired by the Next Generation

At a recent presentation to third graders at an elementary school in Memphis, Tennessee, the North American Forest Foundation asked the question: What does renewable mean to you?

One young—and wise beyond his years—student stood up and said, "Renewable means that something keeps growing, repeating itself, like trees. They're our world's most renewable resource."

The RAHC shared this inspiring tell in a post that received higher than usual engagement, with followers weighing in.



Kicking Off Summer

To mark the unofficial start of summer and grilling season, the RAHC partnered with Cummings Lumber Company and its Barefoot Pellet division to host a giveaway leading up to Memorial Day weekend.

One lucky winner received a new pellet grill and a summer supply of Real American Hardwood BBQ pellets. Along the way, the RAHC educated followers on how no part of a log goes to waste, including sawdust and scraps that are processed into pellets, as well as why pellets are a superior fuel choice for grills and heating devices.

The giveaway was huge success, attracting nearly 500 new followers and generating more than 2,100 content interactions.

Don't Miss Out

There also were posts taking a look at apple trees in celebration of National Apple Pie Day, white oak barrels for World Whiskey Day, and repurposed barrels for National Wine Day.

Follow the RAHC on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube at @RealAmericanHardwood, and on Twitter at @RealAmericanHwd.



Asking the Design/Build Community to Lead the Way

There are many factors to take into account when choosing a building or decorating material, especially when human health and environmental implications of home product choices are a concern. Consider the February 2023 train derailment and chemical spill that took place in East Palestine, Ohio.

The disturbing event raised questions and concerns about the effects of chemicals—like vinyl chloride and the products made from them—in relation to our physical health and the health of our environment. And for good reason!



The Concern is Real!

Linked to cancer of the liver, brain, lungs, and blood, vinyl chloride is used to make a variety of plastics, including PVC (polymer polyvinyl chloride), a primary component used to make resilient and vinyl flooring—as well as cabinets, doors, window frames, mouldings and other household items. And every day, millions of consumers unknowingly put their families at risk when they bring wood-look alternatives and plastic products made with vinyl chloride, into their homes.

Make the Healthy Choice!

Real American Hardwood® products do not jeopardize human health or the environment because they are made of natural, sustainable materials that contribute to the overall health of our planet and its residents. Wood-look plastic products cannot say the same.

So design/build community, if the health and environmental implications of home product choices are a concern for your customers, point them to Real wood products, not wood-look alternatives. Visit RealAmericanHardwood.com for more.

Photo by Scott Hargis

Go Natural with Home Décor

For homeowners who are drawn to natural beauty and products that have a story behind them, what can be better than pieces made by nature and crafted by hand? Nothing!

And that's why the Southern Cypress Manufacturers Association (SCMA) recently published a new article, titled ***Go Natural with Home Décor***. The feature offers five thoughtful ways for homeowners to bring a slice of nature and history into their homes.

The article, distributed through Brandpoint, has already received **1,080 online placements** and reached nearly **160M potential readers**.

Give it a read at CypressInfo.org.



Hardwood Federation Industry Tidbits

by Dana Lee Cole

Executive Director, Hardwood Federation



See You at the Fly-In

Join us in Washington, D.C., **June 13-15**, for Fly-In 2023! Meet your federally elected officials. Share your challenges and needs with them! Network with your peers! Don't miss this opportunity. Fly-In details are available at [HardwoodFederation.com](https://www.hardwoodfederation.com).

House Delivers Supply Chain Package

On May 23, House transportation panel members approved several measures to strengthen the nation's supply chain. According to Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO), the package will remove "regulatory barriers, improve supply chain efficiency, and promote smarter infrastructure investment."

The industry-supported SHIP IT Act (**H.R. 471**) and also **H.R. 1836**, the Ocean Shipping Reform Implementation Act of 2023, are included in the package. However, two noticeable omissions are the Drive Safe Integrity Act (**H.R. 3408**) and Strengthening Supply Chains through Truck Driver Incentives Act (**H.R. 2450**). As the Federation continues to monitor House floor activity this summer, stay tuned for a possible "call to action" to make your voice heard regarding legislation that will help the sector.

Senate Votes to Rescind Bat Rule

On May 11, the Senate narrowly approved two measures that would overturn new ESA regulations on the Northern Long-Eared Bat (NLEB) under the Congressional Review Act.

- The **first measure** overturned the repeal of the Trump Administration's definition of what qualifies as a protected habitat.
- The **second measure** rescinded the November 2022 reclassification of the NLEB as "endangered," rather than "threatened."

Although the House may take similar action on the NLEB, President Biden has already promised to veto the legislation that would reverse his Administration's ESA policies.

HF Endorses "Main Street Tax Certainty Act"

The Hardwood Federation is joining dozens of other business groups in a letter endorsing "The Main Street Tax Certainty Act of 2023," legislation to make permanent the 20% deduction for small and family-owned businesses. The letter cites recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation, labor shortages, and

supply chain disruptions as ongoing challenges that warrant keeping the deduction in place. (The tax reform law of 2017, which established this important tax break, is scheduled to sunset at the end of 2025.)

Other Hardwood Federation Activity in May

HF and its partners in the Wood Products Coalition turned to House and Senate appropriations staff to promote a USDA study that will quantify the amount of carbon stored in wood products, emphasizing that:

- The Forest Products Laboratory, which specializes in researching wood products and their applications, is well suited to break down the amount of carbon stored annually in finished goods.
- Increases in the amount of carbon stored in wood products could then be measured, and their ability to mitigate a changing climate quantified, thereby assuring that industry would be rewarded, rather than penalized, in climate programs.

The Federation joined the Decorative Hardwoods Association and Composite Panels Association in comments to EPA's Request for Information related to low-carbon construction materials, urging federal regulators to:

- Consider sustainable forest management, and recognize the low carbon footprint of finished wood products, especially when compared to other materials such as glass and concrete.
- The coalition also cited two **Environmental Product Declarations** (EPDs) from the Decorative Hardwoods Association and National Wood Flooring Association outlining the "total cradle-to-grave global warming potential" for solid and engineered wood floors compared to alternatives.



Here's to Your Health

Despite significant medical breakthroughs and ongoing research, we're losing the battle against our number one killer, heart disease. And cardiovascular disease isn't just about heart attacks. Cardiovascular disease is a broad category of disorders that covers the blood vessels, muscles, electrical system and valves, as well as the functioning of the heart.



For your well-being, strive to live a non-smoking lifestyle that includes exercise, healthy eating, and regular PCP visits to consistently monitor blood pressure, cholesterol, and other heart disease risk factors. And be informed.

- Nearly half of all heart attacks have no symptoms. And no-symptom attacks were more common in men, but deadlier in women. (2016 Wake Forest University study)
- Blood vessels most likely to clog are those in the heart, as coronary arteries have lots of branches and bends, prime areas for plaque buildup.
- Reach for a banana. A 2020 study involving 4 million people reported that bananas were associated with 24% lower risk for coronary heart disease. And people who consumed the most fruit and vegetables had 11% less cardiovascular disease than those who ate the least.
- Grab a racket! A nine-year research study of over 80,000 adults found that badminton and tennis reduced risk for "fatal" cardiovascular disease by 59%. Aerobics and swimming also lowered the odds. Running, however, was not as effective and could even have a negative impact.

Visit aarp.org/heart to learn more.



*To All the Great
Dad's Out There,
Thanks for Everything*



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
HardwoodInfo.com

Contact
info@hardwood.org

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