

## A Message from HMA's President

by Tommy Petzoldt  
President, HMA



This year's HMA National Conference and Expo in Charleston, South Carolina, is coming up in a few weeks. As my term as HMA President winds down, I found myself thinking about our theme for the conference, **Pathways to Success**, and what different paths mean in terms of our businesses.

A funny phrase we've all heard before kept coming to mind. "If you come to a fork in the road...take it." It's a phrase I say to my kids in moments of indecision, and I've always considered it a light-hearted suggestion that when you come upon challenges, any path forward is a better choice than to remain stagnant. But, I did a little digging today, and discovered it actually derives from baseball great, Yogi Berra. While giving directions to his best friend, Joe Garagiola, to his house in Montclair, Yogi told Joe to take the fork. The fork was unique in that no matter which direction you chose, you would end up at Yogi's house.

Whether you come upon a fork, or see a clear, straight path ahead, our end goal of success for HMA and our respective businesses is the same. A few things I see HMA engaged in to keep us moving forward along a path for long-term success are:

- Regional meetings that are invaluable to members for insights and contacts as they continually strive to improve their own facilities.
- The tireless work of the HMA staff with the Real American Hardwood Coalition, as they continue expanding American hardwood promotion and education initiatives.
- A dedicated and passionate membership, the Board of Directors, and great staff provide for a financially sound HMA.
- The 2024 National Conference, which continues HMA's tradition of being a great opportunity to network with industry peers and attend learning sessions that help our industry navigate pathways to success.

In closing, it's been an honor to serve as HMA's president the last two years and I thank you for your trust as I worked in this role. It's been a privilege to see firsthand the diligence of HMA's staff working on your behalf. We are so fortunate to have them. I'm thankful for the advice and continued engagement by our recent past presidents and the HMA Board of Directors during my term.

Our industry and respective businesses have seen a multitude of challenges in recent years, but what I know for certain is that HMA remains a great organization to keep our industry moving forward as we "take" all the forks in the path ahead.



### An American Icon

With the financial support of hundreds of hardwood companies big and small, the Real American Hardwood Coalition (RAHC) has united an industry and accomplished big things during 2023 in an effort to promote Real American Hardwood products. What's in store for 2024? **Watch** the RAHC's latest video to find out.

## Charleston is the Place to be for Learning & Networking



**Pathways to Success.** That's the theme of HMA's 2024 National Conference & Expo at The Charleston Place in Charleston, South Carolina, **Monday-Wednesday, March 25-27**. There will be learning sessions tailored toward the requests of HMA's membership; sold out exhibit space; and the industry's best networking opportunities—staples of our signature event.

What's on the agenda?

### 2024 Hardwood Industry Outlook

Hear from industry experts on a range of topics. (pictured L to R)



#### ■ Pallets

Mark Barford, Senior Director, Business Partnerships, National Wooden Pallet & Container Association

#### ■ Railway Ties

Nate Irby, Executive Director, Railway Tie Association

#### ■ Residuals

Trip Jobe, Vice President of Sales – Forest Value Chain, North America, ResourceWise

#### ■ Forest Inventory and Analysis

Sonja Oswalt, US Forest Service Forest Resource Analyst, Southern Research Station

#### ■ The Battle Against False Advertising Claims

Keith Christman, President, Decorative Hardwoods Association



### US Forest Service Wood Innovations Grants for Mill Improvements

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.

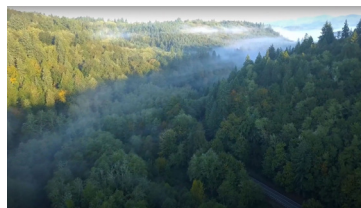
### D.C. on D.C.

Dana Lee Cole, executive director of the Hardwood Federation, sits down with Troy Brown, president of Kretz Lumber, for a one-on-one conversation about the opportunities and challenges of policy implementation in an election year.



### Sawmilling in the Pacific Northwest

Have you been meaning to book a trip to the scenic Pacific Northwest? Sit back, relax, and join HMA 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.



### Effective Communication Panel Discussion

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.



Steve James,  
Frank Miller  
Lumber  
Company



Friederich  
Ostertag,  
Gemwood  
Sawmills



Parker  
Dukas,  
Abenaki  
Timber



Truss Beasley,  
Beasley  
Forest  
Products



Hal Mitchell,  
Atlanta  
Hardwood  
Corp.

### Economic Predictions: Hits and Misses

When it comes to economists, HMA members asked, "What did they get right and wrong?" In response, we're welcoming back our 2023 National Conference speaker, 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.





## It's Last Call for NatCon Registrations

It's not too late to register for HMA's 2024 National Conference and Expo. The three-day event will take place **Monday–Wednesday, March 25–27**, in charming Charleston, South Carolina. [Register today.](#)

- HMA Members & Promotion Contributors | \$715
- SCMA Members | \$715
- Non-Members | \$880

## Thank You, NatCon Sponsors

As we prepare to convene in Charleston, we'd like to recognize our National Conference and Expo sponsors. Your extra support goes a long way in helping make our event the industry's best. Thank you!

Learn more about their companies by stopping by their booths during Expo hours or by clicking on their logos below.



Booth #36



Booth #22



Booth #9



Booth #6



Booth #5



Booth #12



Booth #18



Booth #31



Booth #13



Booth #20



Booth #16



Booth #30



Booth #33



## It's 'Tee' Time at Patriot's Point

Spots are still available for HMA's second annual NatCon Golf Tournament at Patriots Point Links, **Monday, March 25**. Tee times begin at 9 am. The cost is \$130 and includes golf cart rental. Register online at [HMAmembers.org](http://HMAmembers.org). Rental clubs are available.

## Recognizing Our Sponsors

Add your company's name to the list below by signing on as an HMA NatCon Golf Sponsor. Proceeds benefit the RAHC. And you can be a sponsor even if you're not golfing.

Abenaki Timber Corp • Anonymous • Brewco • Continental Underwriters, Inc. • Corley Manufacturing Company • Cummings Lumber • HMR • JoeScan • Jones Lumber Co. • Messersmith Wood Boilers • McDonough Manufacturing Co. • New River Hardwoods • Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual Insurance Company • TS Manufacturing • Wagner Millwork

## Staying Social with Real American Hardwood

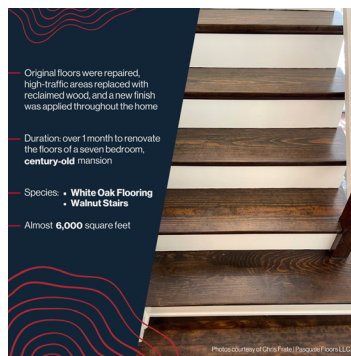
by Ian Faight

Chief Operating Officer, HMA | Digital Community Manager, RAHC

Throughout February, the Real American Hardwood Coalition (RAHC) shared a series of social media posts to inspire, educate, and make hardwood relatable to everyday life. Here's a rundown incase you missed them:

### A Century of Service and Counting

Continuing its Hardwood Makeover series, the RAHC featured a century-old mansion that showed how Real American Hardwood floors add charm and character to a home—and why they're an investment that can last a lifetime! Located in Cleveland, Ohio, the seven-bedroom home featured 6,000 square feet of hardwood flooring that needed to be restored. While much of the home's original white oak floors would remain, Pasquale Floors repaired some areas with new boards. To finish off the project, the white oak was stained to match the three-story home's walnut staircase. See the post on [Instagram](#).



### Do You Care About Your Indoor Air?

The second month of the year places an emphasis on caring about the air in the places you spend your time indoors. For National Care About Your Indoor Air month, the RAHC explained how hardwood surfaces won't harbor dust, dirt, microorganisms, animal dander, or other allergens like carpet; and won't off-gas harmful chemicals like wood-lookalike flooring, particle board furniture, and carpet. See the post on [Instagram](#).



### Sharing the Love

February 20 marked National Love Your Pet Day, and the RAHC took to social media to ask its followers to share photos of their pets relaxing on their hardwood floors and furniture. It turns out pets love Real American Hardwood too. See the post on [Instagram](#).



### A Drizzle of the Real Stuff

National Pancake Week, February 19–25, was a great time to indulge in nature's finest, maple syrup—and we're talking about the real stuff. During the week, the RAHC encouraged followers to savor the flavor by topping their stack of flapjacks with real maple syrup sourced from local businesses and family farms, while providing educational tidbits on maple trees and wood. The RAHC also suggested adding pecans, walnuts, and cherries for extra Real American Hardwood flavor. See the post on [Instagram](#).



## Follow Along





## The Latest from Capitol Hill

by Dana Lee Cole

Executive Director, Hardwood Federation



### Hardwood Industry Outlines Top Policy Priorities for 2024

On February 5, the Hardwood Federation released its **survey** ranking the top public priority items for the industry. As in past years, all issues surveyed scored on the upper end of the rankings, demonstrating that each issue

has a major impact on the industry. Coming first this year was promoting the “environmental benefits of hardwood products” followed closely by a concern with federal regulations. Tax issues scored high as well, with several respondents pointing out that the estate tax and 100% depreciation of equipment were essential to the success of their operations.

### USFS, Federation, and Partners Launch Carbon Data Initiative

On February 9, the Hardwood Federation entered a **Memorandum of Agreement** with the USFS and other industry partners, formally launching a partnership devoted to development of a digital platform that will estimate the carbon footprint of the wood products and forestry sectors. The Federation pledges to provide technical assistance and perspectives unique to hardwood sawmills in the development of the project. The agreement will support industry efforts to gain federal recognition of the environmental benefits of hardwood products, one of the industry’s top issues.



Front row L to R: Keith Christman, Decorative Hardwood Association; Dana Lee Cole, Hardwood Federation; USFS Chief Randy Moore; David Tenny, National Alliance of Forest Owners. Back row L to R: Jackson Morrill, American Wood Council; Peter Madden, U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities; Brent McClendon, National Wood Pallet & Container Association; and Rita Hite, American Forest Foundation.

### Farm Bill Roadblocks Increase by the Day

Progress on a new Farm Bill is turning into the latest casualty in the ongoing congressional battle over the budget, as lawmakers struggle to reach consensus on a price tag for big ticket items, including nutrition assistance. This became clear on February 27, when Sen. Ag. Committee Chair Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) stated publicly that she’d rather drop the Farm Bill altogether, and keep the current 2018 law in place, than agree to cuts in nutrition programs while reallocating climate funds. On the House side, Ag. Committee Chair GT Thompson (R-PA) has been working to maintain bipartisanship, focusing on centrist Democrats to support his budget solutions, which include repurposing left-over funds from the Inflation Reduction Act—the Biden Administration’s key climate initiative—toward conservation and other programs, a move now publicly opposed by his senate counterpart. Release of a draft bill remains a moving target.

### EPA Outlines Draft Labelling Program for Low-Carbon Construction Materials

On February 27, the Federation participated in a webinar with the EPA, which has rolled out a draft labelling program for low carbon construction materials. Unfortunately, the proposal—as currently written—adopts “an initial focus” on steel, asphalt, and concrete, leaving the door open for similar labels for other materials using “a phased approach.”

Prior to the current rulemaking, the Federation and its wood products allies submitted **comments** to the EPA on a “Request for Information” related to construction materials, underscoring the fact that wood products are the quintessential low-carbon material.

## Hardwood Federation 2024 Fly-In Registration is Open

Make your voice heard on Capitol Hill! It’s time to register for the Hardwood Federation’s 2024 Fly-In, **Tuesday-Thursday, May 21-23.**

Members of HMA’s NextGen Leaders Council also will be in D.C. to participate, network, and attend a special session for young leaders. Is there an emerging leader in your company under 40? This would be an excellent opportunity for them.

View the **[schedule of events](#)** and be sure to **[register](#)** early. And don’t wait to book your room at The Westin Washington, D.C. Downtown.

## Results are Clear: Transparent Wood is Stronger than Glass

Wood windows? Well, yes, but we're not just talking about framing anymore. Researchers at the University of Maryland are proving that you could soon see transparent wood used in super-strong screens for smartphones, light fixtures, and in structural applications—like color-changing windows.

As explained in *Knowable Magazine*, materials scientist Liangbing Hu led a group that worked on developing transparent wood, which tests showed was about 10x tougher than glass and around 3x stronger than transparent plastics such as Plexiglass. "The results are amazing, that a piece of wood can be as strong as glass," said Hu.

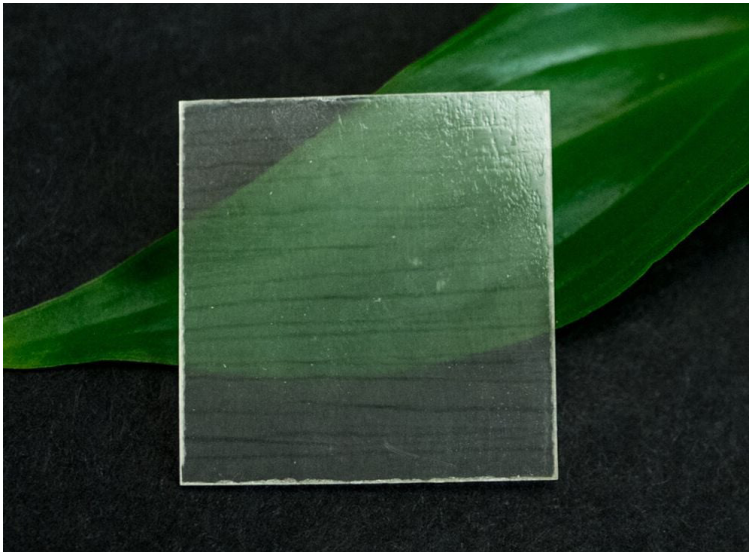


Photo credit  
WILEY-VCH VERLAG GMBH & CO. KGAA, WEINHEIM / CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Creating transparent wood is a complicated process in which scientists modify the cells into a sturdy material by removing lignin, which is the glue that holds cell bundles together and provides wood's earthy brown hues.

In short, natural wood is soaked in a bleaching solution before being immersed in epoxy resin, which then "bends light to a similar degree to the cell walls [and] renders the wood transparent." Hu explained that the cells "create a sturdy honeycomb structure, and the tiny wood fibers are stronger than the best carbon fibers."

Per *Knowable Magazine*, the material is both thin enough and strong enough to be a viable alternative to "products made from thin, easily shattered cuts of plastic or glass, such as display screens." For example, the French company, Woodoo, has used a similar process to create wood screens for products such as car dashboards and advertising billboards.

Transparent wood also has been found to be a better insulator than glass, so it can be used to help buildings retain, or keep out, heat. The ability to hold or repel heat would be useful for energy-efficient buildings and makes transparent wood a better temperature control material than traditional glass.

"When you're trying to achieve sustainability, you don't only want to match the properties of fossil-based materials," said Céline Montanari, a materials scientist at RISE Research Institutes of Sweden. "As a scientist, I want to surpass this."

Read the full article at [TheCoolDown.com](https://www.thecooldown.com).



*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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