



January 2017

More than just talk

By Linda Jovanovich

HMA Executive Vice President

Indulge me, please. Before charging into the business of the New Year, I wanted to take a few moments to briefly review the projects HMA has successfully completed in 2016. Over the past months, the *Link* has updated you on many of them, but this 'review' is important to me. It's my way of keeping ME accountable, and it ensures that **You** are up-to-date on your association happenings.

With regards to HMA's ongoing, but somewhat limited promotion of solid, American Hardwoods:

- **The American Hardwoods Collection** wood sample kit is ready for distribution. Each of our members, as well as the industry associations and stakeholders that assisted us in this extensive undertaking, will soon be receiving a complimentary kit. It's impressive, and you'll be pleased with the new look of this wonderful, hardwood promotion tool. As I hope you know, HMA gives it to each and every architect and designer that attends our registered Continuing Education session. You may want to get it into the hands of your local elected officials to let them know who you – and we – are.
- Three press releases - distributed via our editorial service and trumpeting the facts and attributes of American Hardwood products - have garnered us the largest audience since we began participating in the program, and have directed first-time visitors to the **American Hardwood Information Center**, www.HardwoodInfo.com, in great number! But there's more.
- Stats tell us that 60 percent of our website visitors come from mobile device users! Imagine! And so, HardwoodInfo.com is in the process of being refurbished to make it friendlier for hand-held devices.
- Over the past twelve months, our followers, likes and friends on our **social media pages** have doubled! Mmmmm Hmmmm! Sharing our hardwood story with this new audience has been enjoyable, not to mention easy.

Yes, 2016 was a notable year. HMA's Re\$ource Purchasing program is producing significant financial dividends. Our refreshed member website, www.HMAmembers.org, is functioning optimally for hand-held devices. And we've awarded our inaugural Susan M. Regan Memorial Scholarships. (I cannot believe it will soon be the tenth anniversary of her passing. We've come far in that time, but her voice still guides me many days.)

Additionally, the committee for the 2017 Manufacturing Costs and Wage Survey has been working on a tool that will be a valuable asset to each of our members. Stay tuned for more on that. And here in the office, the staff has been entrenched in National Conference and Expo preparations. FYI, the exhibit hall is sold out and Early Bird Registration is soon to close.

I look to 2017 with great enthusiasm. Ours is an awesome 'message-for-the ages' and one we must repeat louder and more often. Know that I'm thankful for having the opportunity to serve the HMA membership and I hope to spend time with you all in Charleston!

"Early Bird" savings soon to end



Presenters in queue for Conference & Expo

If you've been out of country and just tuning in, HMA's 2017 National Conference and Expo is heading to Charleston, March 22-24. You'll find us at the historic Francis Marion Hotel where we'll be "**Building Bridges**" and working to connect all hardwood industry stakeholders. The networking opportunities promise to be greater than ever and the business sessions are not-to-be-missed. For example,

- If you are having difficulty finding and keeping good employees, a business session entitled, "**Trends in Talent Management and Leadership Development**," may direct you and your team of managers on a different course regarding hiring, training and retaining the 'right' employees. (The Industry Confab will include a roundtable on "**Leadership Development**.")
- Hardwood Federation Executive Director, Dana Lee Cole, will join the dais to discuss "**Politics and Policy in the Trumped up World of D.C.**," plus shed some light on the role the Hardwood Federation can and will play in it all.
- A business session, "**Global Promotion and Innovative Uses of American Hardwood**," will be conducted by Mike Snow, the Executive Director of the American Hardwood Export Council. (So pleased that Mike's schedule could accommodate the HMA!)
- A panel, moderated by Michelle Reynolds, OneDigital, and comprised of healthcare and insurance experts, will discuss, "**Employee Benefits & HealthCare Reform – what should you expect?**" And then **Continue the Conversation** regarding "Benchmarking Your Benefit Programs" at the ever popular "**Industry Confab**."

And when it comes to networking with key industry players, expect new faces and more contacts. In conjunction with HMA's event, the Southern Cypress Manufacturers Association (**SCMA**) and the Wood Component Manufacturers Association (**WCMA**) will also be conducting their annual meetings at the Francis Marion.

For all of the Conference and Expo details – Registration, Sponsorships, Exhibitor Descriptions, and more - please visit www.HMAmembers.org.

Prepare to be charmed in the World's Best City

"Picturesque and exquisitely preserved, Charleston is a visual feast of antebellum architecture, cobblestone streets, flickering lanterns, and historic landmarks." Recently ranked the "World's Best City" by *Travel + Leisure*, Charleston simply has it all - showrooms filled with antiques; delicious artisanal products; tradition-steeped, handcrafted items; one of the oldest public markets in America - a city of history, culture and exquisite cuisine.

For a closer look at the "**World's Best City**," please visit www.charlestoncvb.com. This jewel of the South never fails to romance and charm.

Combining 1920's style & 21st Century Convenience

Located in the heart of historic Charleston is the [Francis Marion Hotel](#). When its doors first opened in 1924, the Hotel boasted lavish accommodations and first-class service. Nearly a century later, the elegance and style of this meticulously restored 'grand lady of the South' continue to delight travelers from across the globe.

Room reservations for HMA's 2017 National Conference and Expo can be made [online](#) or by calling **1.843.722.0600** or **1.877.756.2121**. But hurry. The negotiated, discounted room rate of **\$199 Single/Double** expires: Friday, February 24, 2017.

For Industry Suppliers it's Front and Center

Suppliers to the forest products industry know that in March of each year, '**the**' place to be is HMA's National Conference and Expo. That's where major decision makers for the hardwood industry network with industry peers, and look for solutions, strategies, and technical expertise from the '[best of the best](#)' industry suppliers.

HMA's 2017 NatCon Expo is running true to form. It's already a Sell-Out! And fire and Safety regulations won't allow one more exhibit booth. But industry suppliers, don't despair! Contact the HMA office – 412.244.0440 – to discuss the **Strolling Supplier** option. At this level of participation, you'll attend all meeting events and have the opportunity to 'hobnob' with the best. For a preview of the Exhibit space, plus a list of participating suppliers to date, click [here](#).

And make TODAY your day to sign-on as a **National Conference Sponsor**! Don't miss this opportunity to distinguish your company from the rest of the field. Contact HMA today, 412.244.0440, and make your selection. As our way of saying thanks, we'll recognize your extra support in all printed Conference materials, HMA's monthly newsletter, *The Link*, on www.HMAmembers.org, and that's just for starters. Hope to hear from you.

Thank you to these American Hardwood Promotion Contributors

HMA would like to recognize and offer a hearty '**thank you**' to the committed industry stakeholders who have provided financial support to the American Hardwood promotional campaign. As we've said many times over, "actions speak louder than words!" Thank you for helping us extend the reach of our hardwood message.

For the period November 1, 2015 through October 31, 2016, thank you to these generous contributors:

HMA Member Contributors

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The American Hardwood promotional campaign was developed to **give the hardwood industry a unified identity** and to **elevate American Hardwoods as the decorating, furnishing, building and remodeling material of choice**. To add your support, please call the HMA office at 412.244.0440.

Facelift in the works for the American Hardwood Information Center

For years now, under the auspices of the HMA, **The American Hardwood Information Center**, www.HardwoodInfo.com, has been the authoritative resource for consumers and building professionals seeking factual information about American Hardwoods. Very soon, the site will be undergoing a facelift with the desired end result of not only a refreshed look, but also more mobile-friendly functionality.

As to the website's content, rest assured that it will be overflowing with information and creative tools – **videos, reference sheets, brochures** – about American Hardwood products ranging from flooring, cabinetry and furniture, to millwork and building materials for both residential and commercial applications, as well as advice from industry experts on design trends, care and maintenance, installation, finishing and professional specifying.

Winter weather driving tips from the American Automobile Association

When Old Man Winter causes havoc on the roadways and staying at home is simply NOT an option, have a full tank of gas; be sure your cell phone is charged to the max; and then do your best to follow these severe weather driving tips, courtesy of the transportation pros at AAA.

In the Snow

- **Accelerate and decelerate slowly.** Everything takes longer on snow-covered roads, so limit your speed and give yourself plenty of space. A following distance of eight to ten seconds provides a safe distance, for when you need to stop.
- To slow down quickly, **know your brakes.** With anti-lock brakes (ABS), pressing hard on the pedal activates the ABS. In cars without ABS, "threshold" braking is

best. (Keep your heel on the floorboard and apply firm and steady pressure on the brake pedal with the ball of your foot.)

- **Don't power up hills**, but don't stop mid-hill, either. Get some inertia going in a flat roadway; let that inertia carry you to the top; then reduce speed and proceed downhill as slowly as possible.

If you get Stranded ...

And help is several hours away, safety is always the first priority. Stay with your vehicle and signal distress by either tying a brightly colored cloth to the antenna or hanging a cloth from a rolled up window. Keep one window cracked so that heavy snow/ice can't seal the car shut. To prevent frostbite, use wool blankets, newspapers or paper bags to help keep warm. Every hour, run the engine and heater for 10 minutes. And be sure that the exhaust pipe and underside of your car is clear of snow and blockage.

Hardwood Federation Update

Just the tip of the iceberg!

By Dana Lee Cole

Hardwood Federation Executive Director

At the last minute, the House and Senate managed to come together to pass a continuing resolution budget to fund the government until the end of April and close out the 114th Congress. To say that this Lame Duck session was "lame" would be an understatement, but with so much uncertainty surrounding the transition into the President-Elect Donald Trump Administration, and his choices for numerous top posts still to be determined, it was hard to see anything beyond a government funding extension coming out of Capitol Hill. What this means is that in the first few months of 2017, the 115th Congress should see an actual flurry of activity. It's going to be interesting!

Tax Reform

From the outset of his presidency, the economic and business friendly tactics of Mr. Trump will be closely watched and scrutinized. It's expected that some sort of tax reform will be a major, early undertaking. Whether this means a comprehensive tax overhaul remains to be seen. But the President-Elect has been quite vocal on the elimination of the **Estate Tax**, aka the "Death Tax," which would save American families billions of dollars a year.

House and Senate leadership are also on board with this agenda, with House Ways & Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady signaling that his team will have a bill ready to go when the 115th Congressional session kicks off January 3rd. One of the key concepts being discussed in comprehensive tax reform is "**border adjustability**," which would reduce taxes exponentially on businesses that export product.

Proponents argue that such an approach would encourage domestic manufacturing, as taxes on imports would increase, essentially shifting U.S. tax policy from a production-based assessment to one based on consumption. Hardwood Federation (HF) is awaiting specifics, but will obviously be close to this effort, as debate begins.

Obamacare

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) has publicly stated that an "**Obamacare** repeal resolution will be the first item up in the New Year." This will not be an easy or a short fight, as there will be immense opposition from House and Senate Democrats trying to dig in and hold steady, not to mention the sheer volume of work and tact it will take! HF has not - and does not intend to - get involved in this issue. But it will be a major point of note for many months in 2017.

Infrastructure

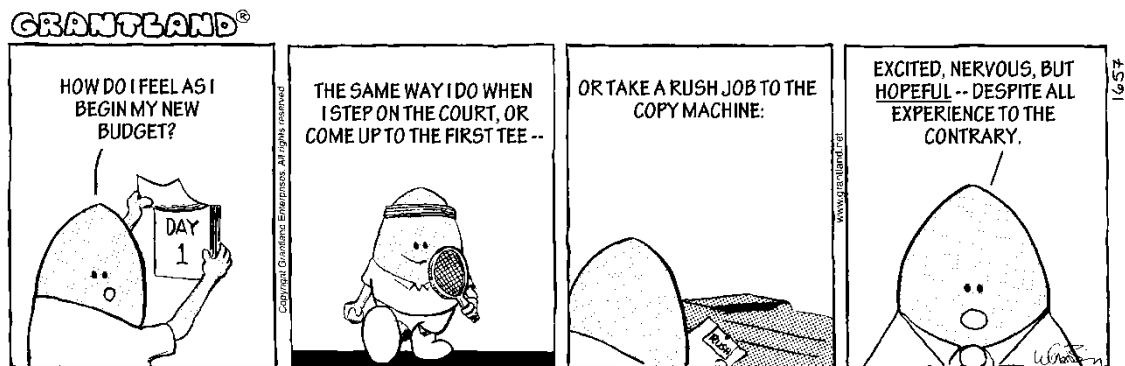
The battles over the **Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)** - the water infrastructure bill that cleared the Senate at the end of the lame duck session - may foreshadow the struggles lawmakers are likely to face if they try to pass the kind of infrastructure legislation President-Elect Trump has promised. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman Jim Inhofe (R-OK), and ranking member Barbara Boxer (D-CA) were willing to work together on the issue of infrastructure. But now, Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY) will be the new chairman of the committee, and he is less enthusiastic about transportation and infrastructure issues. (Not to mention how such a bill would be funded.)

Trade

During the campaigns and debates, trade was a big topic of discussion, and there is no reason to think this won't be one of the major pillars on which President-Elect Trump stakes his presidency. With debate over China, Mexico, TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership) and NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) - just the tip of the iceberg - **trade decisions** will be an early barometer for the 100-day plan for the Trump administration.

Supreme Court Appointments

In February 2016, the death of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia left a glaring hole in the makeup of the nation's top court and started a bitter battle to see if President Obama would be able to get his nominee appointed, or if the process would be slowed enough to carry over to the next administration. As we prepare this update, no one has yet been chosen to fill the spot. The final selection will be a monumental one, and a decision that will have far reaching implications.



HMA Link is published each month exclusively for members of the Hardwood Manufacturers Association. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the HMA. *HMA Link* welcomes comments and questions.

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