



September 2014

On Tap at the Northeast Regional Meeting

Looking forward to seeing you in Williamsport, **September 24-25!** HMA member companies, along with several industry friends, will be opening their doors for a first-hand look into their unique operations. So act now. Visit www.HMAMembers.org for quick and easy online registration because you'll not want to miss all of this.

Wednesday, September 24

6:30 a.m. Breakfast Buffet
7:30 a.m. Depart hotel for Liberty, PA
8:15 a.m. Tour **Wheeland Lumber Company**
10:30 a.m. Tour **Patterson Lumber Co.**
12:30 p.m. Lunch
1:30 p.m. Tour **Cummings Lumber Company**
3:00 p.m. Tour **Barefoot Pellet Company**
3:45 p.m. Depart Barefoot Pellet Company
4:45 p.m. Arrive Holiday Inn
6:00 p.m. Reception/Dinner
Holiday Inn, 100 Pine Street

Thursday, September 25, 2014

6:30 a.m. Breakfast Buffet
7:30 a.m. Depart hotel for Picture Rocks, PA
8 a.m. Tour **Lewis Lumber Products**
10:15 a.m. Tour **Koppers, Inc.**
11:30 a.m. Depart Koppers, Inc.
Noon Arrive Williamsport Regional Airport
12:15 p.m. Arrive Holiday Inn, if necessary

For **all** of the meeting details, be sure to visit www.HMAMembers.org.

Confluence of events in Pennsylvania

This is one for the record books. Seems that all roads are leading to the Keystone State and the week of September 22 is turning into a multifaceted 'hardwood' event as three fine groups of lumbermen - **Penn-York Lumbermen's Club**, the **Pennsylvania Forest Products Association** (PFPA) and the **HMA** - host back-to-back events, September 22-25, in central Pennsylvania.

Seeing this "unplanned" coming together of industry associates as an opportunity for HMA members to make new contacts, share information and have a down right great time talking hardwood, HMA has invited Penn-York and PFPA members to participate in our **Northeast**

Regional set for September 24-25 in Williamsport. And likewise, HMA members are invited to register to attend the respective Penn-York and PFFPA events. Rather like the 'perfect storm,' but in a very good way!

- The **Penn-York** Lumbermen's Club Meeting, in conjunction with the PFFPA event, is set for **Monday, September 22**, hosted by Walker Lumber Company, Inc., Woodland, Pennsylvania. Visit www.pennycork.org for registration and contact information.
- **Tuesday, September 23** is the **PFFPA's** Executive Development Workshop and Annual Meeting at Toftrees Resort and Conference Center, 1 Country Club Lane, State College, Pennsylvania. Workshop and registration information can be found at paforestproducts.org.

Don't be left out of this industry event. Should you have questions, please contact the HMA office at 412.244.0440.

More than just Talk Don't turn a blind eye!

*By Linda Jovanovich
HMA Executive Vice President*

For most, mention of the word '**Bat**' conjures up images of a caped-crusader valiantly protecting the public from villains and the havoc they wreak. But what happens when the villain is the bat and government agencies don the cape?

A possible ruling of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) could have extreme effects on your business. The USFWS feels there is sufficient evidence to place the Northern Long-eared Bat (NLEB) on the Endangered Species list. Further supporting a positive decision is the white-nose syndrome, a disease that is devastating NLEB colonies, with mortality rates exceeding up to 90 percent.

The NLEB is known to inhabit 39 states, including every state east of the Mississippi where hardwood trees grow. With an endangered designation come restrictions on harvesting, thinning and prescribed burning; thereby limiting the ability of forest management professionals to manage the habitat wisely. If current restrictions become final and are enforced, they would have a devastating effect on the entire forest products value chain.

It is **important** that we communicate the need to find a solution to this issue that not only preserves the NLEB, but the many jobs and communities that depend on the forest for their existence and economic well-being.

I urge you to become informed and active. Although the comment period closed on August 29, a final decision on the proposal is not expected until April, 2015. It's not too late to have your voice heard. Contact your **state** Department of Natural Resources and Fish & Wildlife Departments and make them aware of the importance of not curtailing land management activities in the regions inhabited by the NLEB.

Over the next few weeks, the HMA and other industry trade associations, with the help of the Hardwood Federation, will provide pre-formatted, 'write-your-legislator,' response letters for you to complete and email to your state officials. **Don't turn a blind eye!**

Additional Reading: Northern Long-Eared Bat Fact Sheet; Six Month Extension and Re-Opening Comment Period Q&A; 6-Month Extension of Final Determination on the Proposed Endangered Status for the Northern Long-Eared Bat – Federal Register

Survey results distributed to participants

If your company made the time investment to participate in HMA's no cost **2014 Facility & Wage Cost Survey**, by now you've received the survey findings and most likely are already benefiting from the Survey's valuable information! Our thanks to industry consultant and retired North Carolina State University Department of Forest Biomaterials professor, Dr. Joe Denig, for conducting the Survey.

As participants will attest, the comprehensive Survey compiles information regarding compensation for hourly and salaried employees, other employee benefit information, facility information like maintenance and supplies expenses, utilities, taxes, equipment expenses and even transportation costs. Information important to the daily management of your businesses!

If you didn't participate, there is always next time, scheduled for spring 2016.

Millennial Council progress and activity report

By Bob Miller

Frank Miller Lumber Company

The May issue of the *Link* updated HMA members on the Millennial Council's 2014 focus: establish a **Membership Development Plan/Process** - to be presented to the HMA Board of Directors at its fall meeting, held in conjunction with HMA's Regional Meeting, September 23-25, 2014 - that will ultimately result in membership growth, increased revenue, enriched member benefits and expanded American Hardwood education/promotion efforts.

This challenging project has indeed brought these young professionals together. Via conference calls and many, many emails, their brainstorming and creative strategizing has paid off, and I'm pleased to report that as a TEAM, they will be presenting their membership development ideas to HMA's Officers and Board of Directors at the Board meeting in Williamsport. (I see talent and leadership in each member and it's been my privilege to work with them.)

Our August conference call included a candid conversation with industry supplier John Seifert of USNR. His topic, "New technology versus Old and what are the Replacement Costs?" provided plenty of information and got us up to speed on USNR's latest hardwood technologies, as well as replacement and upgrade costs - all part of adding to the knowledge base. (Email me at bmiller@frankmiller.com if you would like the notes from this presentation.)

HMA's purpose for establishing the Millennial Council was twofold; to engage the next generation of leadership in HMA member companies and the hardwood industry and to enhance the personal and professional development of each Council member. And as **Council Coordinator**, it is my personal goal to mentor these young professionals in ways I wish I had been helped in my professional career and with my early involvement in the HMA.

If you plan on attending the Northeast Regional meeting, you'll have the opportunity to meet these fine **2014 Millennial Council** members:

- **Thomas Battle**, Battle Lumber Co., Inc., Wadley, Georgia
- **Julio Alvarez**, Bill Hanks Lumber Company, Inc., Danbury, North Carolina
- **Tim Brownlee**, Brownlee Lumber, Inc., Brookville, Pennsylvania
- **Matthew Netterville**, Fred Netterville Lumber Company, Woodville, Mississippi
- **Jack Shannon, III**, J.T. Shannon Lumber Company, Memphis, Tennessee
- **Tripp Josey**, Josey Lumber Company, Inc., Scotland Neck, North Carolina

- **Claire Getty**, Thompson Appalachian Hardwoods Inc., Huntland, Tennessee
 - **Derek Wheeland**, Wheeland Lumber Company, Liberty, Pennsylvania
 - **Trent Yoder**, Yoder Lumber Company, Inc., Sugarcreek, Ohio
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“Engineering an Optimal Tomorrow”

Mark your calendar. HMA’s 2015 National Conference and Expo, March 25 – 27, is heading to the Omni Nashville with the tools and strategies to assist in “Engineering an Optimal Tomorrow!” Get the planning started!

Small Businesses get a helping hand from OSHA!

If it’s been awhile since your last visit to www.osha.gov, you may not be aware of how resourceful the often-times ‘dreaded’ Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) can be. Available to small businesses are programs that include assistance with safety and health programs, state plans, workplace consultations, voluntary protection programs, strategic partnerships, training and education, and more. For example, did you know that:

Consultation Services

Consultation assistance is available, at **no cost**, to employers who want **help** in establishing and maintaining a safe and healthful workplace. Primarily developed for smaller employers with more hazardous operations, the consultation service is delivered by state governments employing professional safety and health consultants.

The comprehensive assistance includes a hazard survey of the worksite and an appraisal of all aspects of the employer’s existing safety and health management system. The service also offers assistance in developing and implementing an effective safety and health management system. **No penalties** are proposed or citations issued for hazards identified by the consultant, and the employer’s only obligation is to correct all identified serious hazards within the agreed upon correction timeframe.

This consultation assistance is provided to the employer with the assurance that his or her name and firm, and any information about the workplace, will not be routinely reported to OSHA enforcement staff.

Exemplary employers may request participation in OSHA’s Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (**SHARP**). Eligibility for participation in SHARP includes, but is not limited to, receiving a full-service, comprehensive consultation visit, correcting all identified hazards, and developing an effective safety and health program management system.

“Employers accepted into SHARP may receive an **exemption** from programmed inspections (not complaint or accident investigation inspections) for a period of 1 year initially, or 2 years upon renewal.”

Electronic Information

A variety of materials and tools are also available at www.osha.gov. “These include e-Tools, Expert Advisors, Electronic Compliance Assistance Tools (e-CATs), Technical Links, regulations, directives, publications, videos, and other information for employers and employees. OSHA’s software programs and compliance assistance tools “walk” you through challenging safety and health issues and common problems to find the best solutions for your workplace.”

Bottom Line: OSHA can help provide a safe and healthful environment that will increase performance and productivity, and perhaps even lower insurance costs. Find out how.

Hardwood Federation Update

Putting out the Fires

By Dana Lee Cole

Hardwood Federation Executive Director

Those of us in the hardwood industry know the importance of **forest management practices** - materials for our mills, jobs for communities, land for recreation, habitat for wildlife – and as a result of the media's coverage of the devastating forest fires on both public and private lands in the western states, public awareness of the importance of forest management is slowly being elevated.

Most Americans may not totally understand what forest management involves or the scientific details of how it positively impacts forest health, but they are aware that these fires burning out of control are:

- Destroying valuable forest lands
- Dramatically reducing the potential for any type of use
- Needlessly polluting the air
- Negatively impacting the states and communities where they take place
- Negatively impacting the federal government's ability to properly manage other federal lands.

Elected officials in both the U.S. House and Senate - from both sides of the aisle - agree that the current mechanism for funding wildfire suppression is inefficient and causes major disruptions to land management activities not just in Western states, the site of most fire activity, but in every state in the country.

Currently, when federal agencies run out of money to fight fires, they take funds from other forest management program accounts, including the timber harvest programs which are so important to the hardwood industry. It's a classic "robbing Peter to pay Paul" scenario that could easily be avoided.

Thankfully, Congress has taken note and is considering options that will provide necessary funding to fight or suppress forest fires on public lands, while at the same time adequately fund other forest management programs that are essential to forest health.

One idea is to fund the most catastrophic wildfires like other natural disasters, then reinvest in vital programs that help improve federal, tribal, state and private lands, including the very activities that would help to reduce the cost and risk of wildfires in the future. Bills in both the House and Senate support this concept, and the White House has signaled its support.

However, the devil is in the details. Opinions differ as to how funding would work. Should there be offsets? How should the program be managed? And while it is unlikely anything will be finalized for 2015, the good news is that **people are talking!** This is an issue that has bipartisan agreement and one that could have a significant upside for the hardwood industry, if we can drive the parties together towards compromise.

The Hardwood Federation (HF) staff has pushed this issue to Members of Congress and their staff, even during the August recess. We anticipate it will be a **key** issue for HF members planning to be in Washington for our annual Fly-In, September 8-10. You are planning to be part of the hardwood entourage, yes?

Inclusion of wood products

In early August, the U.S. Department of Agriculture [issued a news release announcing "a final rule"](#) eliminating the restrictions on including mature market wood products and other

materials in the BioPreferred program. The action implements changes included in the 2014 Farm Bill and also revises the Biobased Products Federal Procurement Guidelines to incorporate changes that were made in the 2008 and 2014 Farm Bills.

The 2014 Farm Bill required the BioPreferred program to 'promote biobased products, including forest products, that apply an innovative approach to growing, harvesting, sourcing, procuring, processing, manufacturing, or application of biobased products regardless of the date of entry into the marketplace.' Products that were previously considered to be "mature market" products - those that had a significant market share prior to 1972 - and were previously ineligible for the BioPreferred program, will now be included in the program if manufacturers demonstrate that they apply an "**innovative approach**" in any part of the life cycle of their product."

"The inclusion of innovative wood products, said USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack, "furthers our commitment to strengthening the biobased economy and ensures that the Federal government uses home American grown products whenever possible."

For the entire release, visit www.usda.gov.

More from the USDA

Secretary Vilsack also "announced the selection of 21 new members to the Planning Rule Federal Advisory Committee (FACA), which provides guidance and recommendations on management of America's national forests."

In his news release regarding the Rule, Secretary Vilsack said, "The rule will allow the creation of management plans that will protect and restore National Forest System lands in order to sustain communities and protect natural resources. Members of the Planning Rule Advisory Committee help us strengthen ecological, social, economic and cultural sustainability objectives."

Coming from diverse backgrounds and representing "the full range of public interests in management of National Forest System lands and geographically diverse locations and communities," the committee was selected from candidates who had responded to the Secretary's March 2014 request for nominations.

For a list of the advisory committee members, visit www.usda.gov.

How to be a better listener

Well known American author and humorist Mark Twain once said, "If we were supposed to talk more than we listen, we would have two tongues and one ear!"

Imagine his biting critique today, especially if he could observe our behavior during meetings - checking email, texting, perusing the internet and who knows what else - all under the guise of 'listening!' But improved listening skills can be achieved. It just takes effort.

Prepare to Listen – Our minds are easily distracted, so "put other thoughts out of mind and concentrate on the messages that are being communicated." Relax; clear your mind of other things; focus on the speaker.

Minimize Distractions – that can disrupt the listening process. Stowing electronic devices will help eliminate interruptions and enable you to focus on what is being said.

Stop Talking – Give the speaker your undivided attention. "Never interrupt or finish a sentence for someone." The time to clarify your understanding is when the speaker has finished talking.

Be impartial – Ignore regional accents, mannerisms, and other personal delivery styles. Focus on what is being said and remember that “a good speaker will use both volume and tone to their advantage to keep an audience attentive.”

Non-Verbal Communication – We listen with our ears “but also with our eyes. Gestures, facial expressions and eye-movements can all be important. Watch and pick up the additional information being transmitted via non-verbal communication.”

Information source: www.skillsyouneed.com

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