

THE LOG

June / July 2017

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LAKE STATES LUMBER ASSOCIATION

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From the President

As president of Lake States, I feel it is my responsibility to continually try to understand what the challenges are facing our members so that we can focus as an association on trying to address those issues. Whenever I ask people in the industry what are the issues facing them today, the conversation inevitably leads to *"It just isn't as much fun as it used to be."* This roughly can be translated into *"We're getting by but we're not making much money."* Much like "hope", "getting by" should not be a business strategy.

Our industry certainly took a beating during the downturn, but I want to give you a date, June 2009. That is 8 years ago and it is the month that the Great Recession officially ended. My suspicion is that most of our members do not feel like things are back to normal. Why is that? The obvious answer is because it is harder to make a buck, but why? It certainly is not because of demand. In 2009, the total consumption of US hardwoods was estimated to be 6.5 mmbf, today it is 8.3mmbf. In 2009, housing starts were around 550,000, today they are over 1,100,000.

To a large degree it is a supply issue. Because the industry has an abundance of capacity, the supply tends to be kept at elevated levels. With that excess supply, prices suffer. However, supply can be controlled and pricing negotiated. The real reason is because our industry accepts it. We simply accept investment returns that are too low. As eternalized by the Pogo cartoon strip in the '70's, *"We have met the enemy and he is us."*

This does not mean there are not a lot of other factors impacting our profitability, but we are the ones that, at the end of the day, are willing to take an order that does not result in the return that we would like, or quite honestly need. The lumber industry is capital intensive and relatively risky, and for that, there should be an appropriate return. At some point there will be, it is just a matter of how we as an industry choose to get there. We could choose to recognize the cost of capital, the risks associated with a commodity market and price our products accordingly, or we could choose to allow the power of the free market to make the decision for us. If we allow the latter, the result will be that, at some point, there will be a lot less of us in this business.

Continued on page 3



**LAKE STATES LUMBER ASSOCIATION, INC. . .
 PROVIDING LEADERSHIP AND EDUCATION TO ASSURE
 THE SUSTAINABILITY OF OUR FOREST RESOURCES**

LSLA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 19 & 20, 2017
 Golf Outing—Minocqua, WI

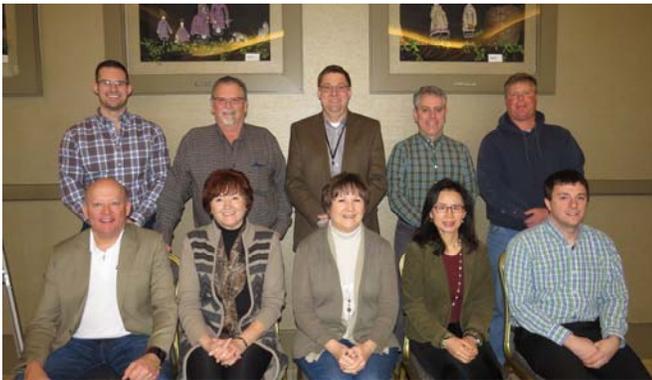
September 18-20, 2017
 Hardwood Lumber Grading Short Course
 Pewamo, MI

September 21, 2017
 Sawing, Edging & Trimming Class
 Pewamo, MI

January 17-19, 2018
 Annual Winter Meeting
 Appleton, WI

Watch for details of these and other upcoming events

2017 LSLA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Back Row (left to right): Brady Francois (Snowbelt Hardwoods), Dennis Gustafson (Besse Forest Products Group), Gus Welter (Granite Valley Forest Products), Butch Fisher (AJD Forest Products), Pete Johnson (AAA Hardwoods). Front Row (left to right): Larry Krueger (Krueger Lumber), Margaret Minerick (Sagola Hardwoods), Maryanne Dainsberg (LSLA Admin Coord), Jennifer Lu (WI DATCP), Rob Paradise (Devereaux Sawmill). Not pictured: Jim Maltese (Stella-Jones Corp). Photo courtesy of Wayne Miller, Miller Publications.

The Log is published bi-monthly by the Lake States Lumber Association, Inc. For address corrections or to contribute news articles, opinion pages, classified ads, or advertising, contact us at:

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- Scott Shaver Director
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HARDWOOD FEDERATION UPDATE

By Dana Lee Cole—Executive Director, Hardwood Federation

Sonny Perdue Confirmed as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

President Trump made the final addition to his cabinet on Monday April 24th when the U.S. Senate confirmed former Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) by an 87-11 vote. Secretary Perdue has deep ties to the agriculture community; he grew up on a farm in central Georgia and has owned several agriculture companies. At his confirmation hearing Mr. Perdue made several statements regarding the need for a strong forest products industry and the need for putting more resources towards improving forest health.

The USDA is a huge department with vast responsibilities, and Secretary Perdue will have an important role in key issues for the Hardwood Federation. Not only is the U.S. Forest Service housed within the USDA, they also administer the Foreign Market Development and Market Access Programs that support the work done by the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC). In addition, USDA has oversight of pest and invasive species control regulations, administers the Lacey Act and runs the Bio-Based Procurement Program (which includes hardwood products). And these are just programs of specific interest to the Hardwood Industry. USDA's focus extends to the entire rural economy, including all forms of agribusiness, agricultural and economic research and statistics, animal and plant safety, food and nutrition programs (including food stamps), and rural economic development. We also anticipate that Secretary Perdue will have a role in decisions regarding U.S. trade agreements and be a strong voice on behalf of the U.S. agricultural sector.

In addition to the existing management responsibilities, the day after Secretary's confirmation, President Trump signed an Executive Order creating a Task Force on Agriculture

and Rural Prosperity. The Task Force will be chaired by Secretary Sonny Perdue. The purpose of the Task Force is to identify legislative, regulatory and policy changes that support the agriculture economy including forestry. The scope of the order is quite large, including everything from tax and regulatory reform to technology to workforce development. Timber harvests are also mentioned specifically.

Continued on next page

BUYERS OF STANDING TIMBER & TIMBERLAND Purchasing Hardwood Logs & Bolts

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FROM THE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

Unfortunately, I believe it is inevitable that it will be the latter. We are a highly fragmented industry that tends to be suspicious of others. If we were a family, we would certainly have trust issues, but this does not have to be a death march. While I am all for endurance tests, I would rather see the industry survive like it is, made up of a diversified group of good hardworking people. In order for that to happen, we need to change as a group. If you believe that you can wait this thing out and it will get better, you are going to be a casualty. You need to start thinking about how are you going to make the return you want today. That starts with being willing to say "No, I

won't sell my product at a price that doesn't offer a reasonable return." A sale is only made when both parties believe that the value of doing the deal is greater than the value of not doing the deal. When you are determining those values, make sure you not just basing your decision on getting by; I would like you to be here for the long term.

Gus Welter, LSLA President
Direct: 920-250-5678
Cell: 608-778-5505
Email: gwelter@granitevalley.com

HARDWOOD FEDERATION (CONT'D)

The Hardwood Federation and HFPAC Boards have already sent a letter to Secretary Perdue introducing ourselves and outlining our priority policies. The welcome letter to Secretary Perdue is also a good first step towards communicating our recommendations for the Task Force considering legislative and policy changes; we will be looking for other opportunities to provide input into this process and hope members of the LSLA will provide their thoughts and ideas to us to share.

The Hardwood Federation has heard from some of our Georgia contacts that "Sonny knows trees" and we have no reason to doubt them. We anticipate a productive working relationship with the new Secretary!

President's Proposed Budget

President Trump released his FY 2018 Budget on May 23. The Hardwood Federation is still culling through the bill for impacts, but did note the following recommendations:

1. **Export Promotion:** The proposed budget calls for eliminating funding for both the MAP and FMD programs which support AHEC initiatives.
2. **US Forest Service:** The budget proposes massive cuts to the Forest Service, including a more than 70 percent cut to Capital Improvement & Maintenance and eliminating the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (\$40 million program dollars); overall the budget proposes cutting almost 8 percent

from the National Forest System, including cutting more than \$8.5 million out of the timber sale program.

3. **Wildfire Funding:** The proposed budget calls for moving the Hazardous Fuels into the National Forest Service, increasing Preparedness funding by \$259 million and reducing Suppression funding by \$191 million. There is also a 27 percent reduction in other programs, primarily fire research. It does not appear to include recommended legislative fixes for fire suppression funding.

The above proposed cuts are contrary to current policy positions held by the Hardwood Federation. We will be stepping up existing efforts to educate members of Congress about how these existing programs support the hardwood industry and how reductions and eliminations would negatively impact hardwood businesses. It is important to remember that this document is only a starting point in a very long process and there is significant support on Capitol Hill for existing export promotion programs and enhanced forest maintenance funding and activities. I am sure these issues will be of primary focus during the September Fly-In. Don't forget to register!

We will continue to monitor progress on the budget and keep you updated. ❖

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THE WISCONSIN REPORT

By Gunnar Bergersen, LSLA Wisconsin Legislative Consultant

Wisconsin's leading timber and forest associations join the Chair of the Forestry Committee and the Wisconsin Council on Forestry in Opposition to the Forestry Mill Tax Sunset (Press Release from LSLA, GLTPA and WCF)

Rhineland, WI- The Board of Directors of the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association (GLTPA), the Lake States Lumber Association (LSLA) and the Wisconsin Consulting Foresters (WCF) join the positions taken by the Chairman of the Assembly Committee on Forestry Jeff Mursau (R-Crivitz) and the Wisconsin Council on Forestry in opposition to the sunset of the Forestry Mill Tax. These organizations, who are involved in every aspect of the states timber and forest products industry, believe that elimination of the Forestry Mill Tax would have a negative impact on an industry that is one of the leading economic drivers of the state.

As the state struggles to find a long-term funding solution for the state's transportation program, and biennially debates how much funding is available to support K-12 education, the Medicaid program, and the Department of

Corrections, we don't need to add further uncertainty into the mix by eliminating a dedicated revenue stream which adequately maintains, grows and protects one the state's most important resources.

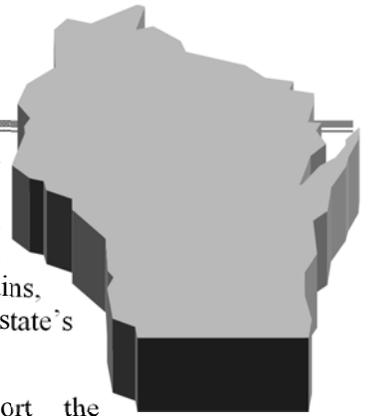
These organizations support the Wisconsin Council on Forestry's (the gubernatorially appointed council charged with advising the Governor, Legislature, Department of Natural Resources, and other state agencies on a host of forestry issues) recommendation to the Joint Finance Committee which would:

- (1) maintain the FMT through this biennium;
- (2) audit the forestry account so we can be fully informed on how collected funds are allocated;
- (3) following the audit, make informed recommendations on how forestry funds are best spent.

GLTPA Board member Aaron Burmeister released the following statement: "The Forestry mill tax of Wisconsin is important for us to maintain the forest on a responsible basis. It will allow us to continue valuable research on controlling exotic and invasive plants and insects that could bring doom to our forest resource! We would much prefer that the Forestry Mill Tax remain in place and that the additional surplus general purpose revenue be used to fix our rural roads and bridges, so that our industry and other industries in Wisconsin can efficiently get raw products from the forests and fields to our respective mills and markets."

GLTPA Executive Committee member Mark Huempfer released the following statement: "Wisconsin has some of the best sustainably managed forests in the world due to programs

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THE MICHIGAN REPORT (CONT'D)

HOUSE PASSES BILL BLOCKING RULES MORE STRINGENT THAN FEDERAL STANDARDS

The Michigan House has again approved legislation blocking state agencies from adopting rules more stringent than those applied by the federal government. Lawmakers voted, 57-50, to approve HB 4205. It's a bill similar to what the House approved last term that never got a Senate

hearing. HB 4205, sponsored by Rep. Triston COLE (R-Mancelona), prohibits a state agency from making rules more stringent than federal standards unless it is specifically authorized to do so by state statute, or if the director of the agency "determines that the preponderance of the evidence establishes a need to exceed the federal standard." ❖

BIGGEST WI WORKER'S COMP RATE DECREASE IN YEARS

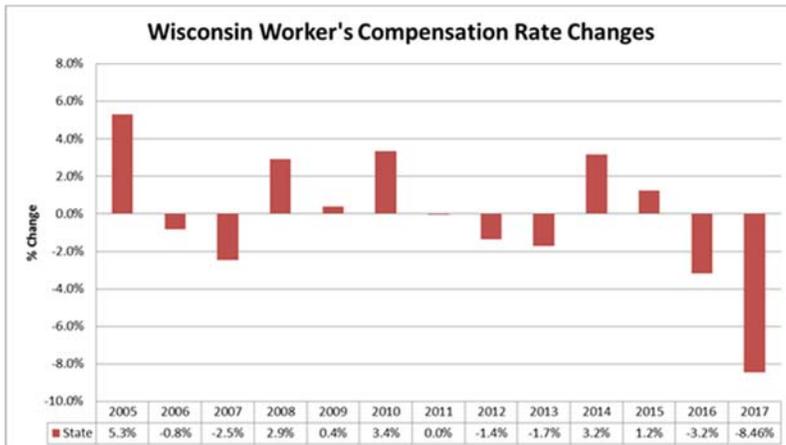
By Scott Shaver—Account Executive, R&R Insurance

The Wisconsin Worker's Compensation Rating Bureau, the organization that sets the worker's compensation rates in Wisconsin, has recommended an 8.46% overall decrease in worker's compensation rates to take effect on 10/1/2017. This represents the largest rate decrease going back at least three decades, although it is currently unclear

exactly what we will see for movement on specific lumber related classification codes. I am optimistic that these codes will reflect a similar decrease.

Driven by lower medical inflation and fewer than expected losses in Wisconsin, employers are benefiting from rate decreases over the past several years including a decrease of 3.19% in 2016. This trend seems to track with results in other states including Michigan where a double digit decrease is anticipated in 2017.

Note that rates by individual classification codes will vary and that your company's experience modification factor will impact whether or not you are able to take full advantage of any rate decrease. More information specific to the lumber industry will follow in the next issue of The Log. ❖



THE WISCONSIN REPORT (CONT'D)

that have been established and maintained by the Division of Forestry within the Department of Natural Resources. Examples include the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program, the state's silvicultural guidelines, Good Neighbor Authority and industry leading best management practices. Unpredictable funding, whereby forestry will now have to compete every biennium for adequate funding with education, transportation and Medicaid, puts these programs and further innovation in jeopardy."

Gunnar Bergersen, Lake States Lumber Association, released the following statement: "The elimination of the Forest mill tax puts long term DNR forest management for slow growing timber in jeopardy. The public recognized the need for a reliable funding source for forest management when the forest mill tax was created by state wide referendum"

Don Peterson, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Consulting Foresters: "Wisconsin's Managed Forest Law (MFL) Program is arguably the most successful incentive program for sustainable forest management of private woodlands in the country. With an enrollment of over 40,000 landowners with over 3.3 million acres of forest land, the MFL program requires twenty-five or fifty-year management plans. This long-term forest management

philosophy would be threatened by the current proposed elimination of the Forestry Mill Tax. To effectively manage forests on a long-term, sustainable basis, a long term sustainable funding source is needed such as the Forestry Mill Tax has provided since 1931."

While our organizations appreciate the support the current Administration has shown to Wisconsin's timber and forest products industry, we are concerned about the future and would prefer to continue to work with the Administration and the Legislature to find a solution whereby there can be continued reductions in property taxes and certainty in the funding of programs that ensure the long-term viability of this important resource. ❖

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2017 GOLF OUTING SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

JULY 20; MINOCQUA, WI

The LSLA Annual Golf Outing will be held on July 20 at Timber Ridge Golf Club in the beautiful northwoods of Minocqua, Wisconsin. In much the same format as past outings, the recreation committee has planned many exciting events for this year's outing:

- Par Three Challenge
- Putting Contest
- Putt for Dough
- Cash Shoot-out
- Bucket Raffle
- Individual Cash Prizes
- Individual Hole Events

With all these events come unique sponsorship opportunities, the proceeds of which help support LSLA and LSLA Education. Please take a moment to look over the different sponsorships listed below. We hope you can help make this year's event the most successful ever. To show our appreciation, we will again be holding a special **Sponsor Drawing** to be awarded to one lucky contributing company.

The following companies have already committed to sponsorships for the golf outing:

- American Wood Fibers - Lunch Sponsor
- Baillie Lumber - Cash Shoot-out and Safe Ride
- Krueger Lumber & McDonough Manufacturing - Beverage Cart
- Marth Wood Shavings - Welcome Reception (Wednesday evening, July 19)
- Northern Hardwoods - Social Hour and Entertainment
- Stella Jones - Golf Ball
- WD Flooring - Snack Cart/Water

Below are the sponsorships still available. Look them over and claim yours today!

(1) **Prize Sponsor (\$2,000)**

- Exclusive rights to golfer gift
- Company name/logo on player gift
- Placement at registration area to distribute gifts
- 2 tee box signs
- 8 entries in sponsor raffle

(1) **Beverage Sponsor (\$750)**

- Exclusive rights to beverage cart, either front or back nine, or snack shack
- Company name on cart and representative allowed to ride along
- 3 entries in sponsor raffle

(6) **Bucket Raffle Sponsor (\$500)**

- Prize sponsor for bucket raffle to benefit LSLA Education
- Company name displayed on prize and raffle sign
- Tee box sign displayed on golf course
- 2 entries in sponsor raffle

(4) **Par Three Sponsors (\$500)**

- Exclusive rights to one par three
- Company sign & prize sponsor for hole
- Company representative allowed to work hole and mingle with participants
- 2 entries in sponsor raffle

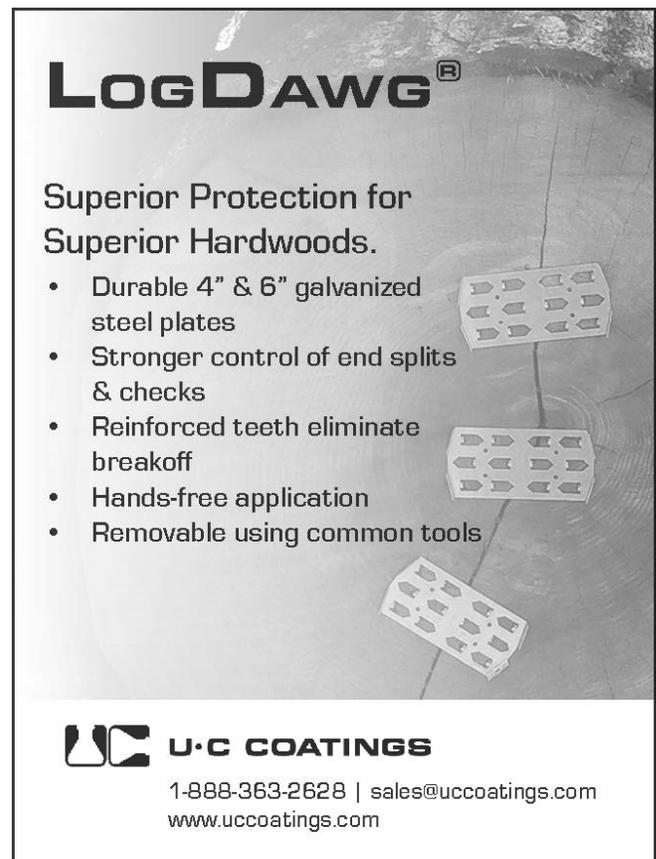
(?) **Hole Sponsor (\$250)**

- Tee box sign
- 1 entry in sponsor raffle

(?) **Special Events Sponsor (\$TBD)**

- Special sponsorship opportunities are available as well. Contact LSLA for details.
- Company name displayed

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2017 GOLF OUTING REGISTRATION INFORMATION

JULY 20; MINOCQUA, WI

The annual Golf Outing will offer many fun activities, as always:

- For those who would like to arrive on Wednesday, July 19, discounted rates and tee times will be available for LSLA members at Timber Ridge Golf Club. LSLA has a block of tee times reserved, with other times based on availability. If you plan to take advantage of this special rate, please book your tee time directly with the golf course (715-356-9502). Make sure to mention LSLA to receive the special rate.
- Wednesday evening will feature the popular **Welcome Reception** at 6 pm, sponsored by Marth Wood Shaving Supply. A lakeside reception with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres at the Boat House's Islander Lounge will be followed by a pub crawl through downtown Minocqua. Live entertainment sponsored by Northern Hardwoods door prizes and late night snacks will follow at the Minocqua Brewing Company's Divano's Lounge.
- Thursday, July 20, a shuttle service will take golfers from their hotels to the golf course, where a full breakfast will be served from 8 am—9:30 am.
- The Shot Gun Start at 10 am will begin the golf, which will run until 4 pm. Lunch will be provided by American Wood Fibers, and beverages by Krueger Lumber and McDonough Manufacturing.
- At 4 pm, U-C Coatings will be sponsoring the Putt for Dough and Baillie Lumber will sponsor the Cash Shoot-out.

- The Thursday Dinner, Awards and Prizes will take place at Rueland's Convention Center (attached to the AmericInn Suites) from 7– 8:30 pm.

Three area hotels have rooms blocked off for LSLA:

AmericInn Suites (reservation deadline June 30)
700 Hwy 51 North
Minocqua, WI
715-356-3730

The Pointe Hotel & Suites (reservation deadline June 23)
Hwy 51 North
Minocqua, WI
715-356-4431

Best Western Plus (reservation deadline June 30)
320 Front St.
Minocqua, WI
715-356-1800

When you call to make your hotel reservation, be sure to ask for the LSLA block of rooms. Do not wait to make your reservation. Once the block of rooms is filled, there will be no more rooms available.

For a complete schedule, hotel information, and a registration form, visit www.lsla.com. ❖

ADDITIONAL LSLA MEMBER

The following company has just become a member of LSLA. Please make a note of these in your copy of the 2017 Buyers Guide.

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FAX: 715-674-2139

Cory Chitko

Email: chitkobroslumber@gmail.com

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ANNUAL: 4MMBF

SPECIES: Hardwoods

PRODUCTS: Logs / Bolts

2017 BUYERS GUIDES

The 2017 Buyers Guides were mailed out in early March to each company who has paid membership dues for 2017. If your company would like additional copies, they are available for \$10 each (member price). Non-members may purchase a copy for \$25. Contact the LSLA office if you are interested (920-884-0409 or email us at lsla@lsla.com) ❖

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WHERE IS DAVID BRADLEY?

David B was sighted hanging out with the LSLA Board members and some MI legislators on May 15 at a steak fry hosted by Sen. Tom Caspersen in downtown Lansing, MI.

Hopefully he was able to give his input on various issues before the Board meeting which was held the next day at Quality Hardwoods in Sunfield, MI. ❖



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Dinner Sponsors:
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Thank You to the following companies who contributed to the 2017 Winter Meeting Legacy Load of Lumber auction:

Action Floors
Florence Hardwoods
Krueger Lumber
Lindemann Hauling
McDonough Mfg
Menzner Lumber
MLC Transportation
Northwest Hardwoods

Quality Hardwoods, Inc.
Rockland Flooring
Snowbelt Hardwoods
Tigerton Lumber
TMX Shipping
U-C Coatings
White City Lumber
WI Lift Truck

Thank You to the following companies who donated items valued at \$250 or more to our 2017 Winter Meeting Auction:

AJD Forest Products
Dave Schroeder
Green Bay Packers
Hardwood Market Report
Heidel House Resort and Spa
Kloes Custom Furniture
Larry Krueger
Logger's Shopper
Lumbermen's Equipment Digest
Matelski Lumber Co Inc.
Menzner Lumber &
MLC Transportation
Quality One Woodwork/
Rockland Flooring

Radisson Hotel &
Conference Center
Stella-Jones
The Waters of Minocqua
Timber Ridge Golf Course,
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