

# THE LOG

February / March 2024

## Inside This Issue:

- 3 Hardwood Federation Update
- 4 Thank you
- 5 Winter Meeting Wrap-Up
- 6 WI Legislative Report
- 7 MI Legislative Report
- 7 RAHC Update
- 7 Hardwood Federation (cont'd)
- 8 LSLA Education Report
- 8 Calendar of Events
- 9 NTC—Wood Olympics
- 10 Wood Olympics Brochure
- 11 Where is David Bradley?

## LAKE STATES LUMBER ASSOCIATION

Address:  
337 Superior Avenue  
Crystal Falls, MI 49920

Website:  
[www.lsla.com](http://www.lsla.com)

Email:  
[lsla@lsla.com](mailto:lsla@lsla.com)

Phone:  
(920) 884-0409

Fax:  
(906) 875-3724

## Letter from the President

### Are You In the Loop?

Are you or someone from your company involved enough to stay up-to-date with the everchanging climate of our world/industry? Do you know a company that is not a member of LSLA? Now more than ever, communication is key for a thriving business and industry. I urge you to stay updated and in touch with your local government, association leaders, and all aspects of your industry. Take a look at the items below to make sure *YOU* are in the loop with topics in our industry.

- Hardwood Manufacturers Association Annual Conference: **March 25-27** in Charleston, SC
- Hardwood Federation Fly In: **May 21-23**
- 54% of Homebuyers Will Pay More For Hardwood Floors
- As mentioned by **Dana Cole** at our Annual Meeting, WI Representative Tom Tiffany introduced a crucial bill in DC to promote access to hardwood development studies, grants and education to further share the importance of hardwood in the world we live in today. Find detailed information at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/6880>.

Jim Maltese  
Stella-Jones Corporation  
LSLA President  
[jmaltese@stella-jones.com](mailto:jmaltese@stella-jones.com)





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 Crystal Falls, MI 49920  
 Phone: (920) 884-0409  
 Email: [lsla@lsla.com](mailto:lsla@lsla.com)



**Back Row (left to right):** Steve Peters (Rockland Flooring), Kirby Kendrick (Kendrick Forest Products), Michael Skenadore (Menominee Tribal Enterprises), Loren DeJonge (Constructive Sheet Metal), Rick Luukkala (Performance Pallet Corp.)

**Front Row (left to right):** Jennifer Lu (WI DATCP), Jim Maltese (Stella-Jones Corp.), Bill Millard (Granite Valley Forest Products/Rockbridge Sawmill) Nikki Loehr (LSLA Administrative Coordinator), Kate Miller (Northern Hardwoods/JM Longyear)

**Not Pictured:** Kyle Jeske (Richardson Hardwoods), Peter Connor (WD Flooring)

**Photo courtesy of** Chris Fehr, Miller Wood Trade Publications

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# Hardwood Federation Update

## By Dana Lee Cole, Executive Director



### Campaign 2024 is in Full Swing. How You Can Take Action!

#### Farm Bill

As everyone is aware, 2024 is an election year. Each and every one of the 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives are up for grabs as are 34 Senate seats. Returning members, their opponents and candidates running for open seats, will all be hitting the campaign trail trying to speak to as many constituents as possible. Don't be caught short if you run into a 2024 hopeful. The Hardwood Federation has talking points on multiple topics you can access.

The Farm Bill includes a forestry title that impacts the U.S. hardwood industry in multiple ways; it is reauthorized every five years. The bill was scheduled for action last year but was deferred until 2024. Below are several key legislative items the Hardwood Federation is supporting related to the Farm Bill. Many of these were initiated in 2023 and will continue this year. In most cases, we have already provided recommendations and language to make sure hardwood is included and reflected in program benefits, but we need your voice to support Hardwood Federation requests we have already sent to House and Senate offices to include these measures as part of the final Farm Bill package.

Please encourage candidates to support the following potential provisions in the Farm Bill:

Hardwood Export Promotion Funding – Securing funding for export programs that support the hardwood industry is always at the top of our Farm Bill list. The Hardwood Federation strongly supports the bipartisan Agriculture Export Promotion Act of 2023 which would essentially double the funding for the MAP and FMD programs that fund AHEC operations. Budget constraints will make it tough for doubled funding to pass, but the Federation continues to advocate aggressively for continued funding for both programs at increased or current levels.

Timber Innovation for Building Rural Communities Act – This bipartisan, bicameral bill, sponsored by Senators Wyden (D-OR) and Crapo (R-ID) and Reps. Salinas (D-OR), Gluesenkamp Perez (D-WA) and Du-

arte (R-CA) could be folded into a final Farm Bill. The proposal includes several positive provisions for the industry including establishing a USDA platform measuring, collecting, and sharing data related to the carbon benefits of wood products, and recognizing the value of carbon reduction and environmental benefits of wood in building design and furnishings in USDA grant programs.

Jobs In the Woods Act – This fall, Senate and House members introduced the bipartisan “Jobs in the Woods Act.” (H.R. 5344, S. 3063), a bill that would provide education grants ranging in size from \$500,000 to \$2 million to promote jobs in the understaffed timber industry and U.S. Forest Service. Legislative champions include Reps. Chavez-Deremer (R-OR) and Gluesenkamp-Perez (D-WA) on the House side and Sens. King (I-ME) and Risch (R-ID).

Another bill that could potentially be included in the Farm Bill is the Hardwood Access and Development Program. In an important milestone for the hardwood sector, Reps. Tom Tiffany (R-WI) and Annie Kuster (D-NH) have sponsored HR 6880, the Hardwood Products Access and Development Program (HAP) bill in the House.

- The program would support research efforts related to the environmental and health benefits of domestically produced hardwood products.
- Eligible entities include non-profit organizations serving the U.S. hardwood sector (including the Real American Hardwood Coalition and other hardwood focused associations), universities and research organizations.
- Research related to environmental and health benefits of domestic hardwood products, research related to consumer attitudes and knowledge of hardwood products, promotion of research to the public and potential consumers, demonstration projects highlighting environmental and health benefits of hardwood products are all included as potential activities related to the HAP.
- Up to \$25 million over five years in funding is included in the bill language.

We are very pleased to have a House bill and are now focused on getting a companion bill in the Senate

*Continued on page 7*



## **Winter Meeting Sponsorships**

***Thank You Winter Meeting Sponsors & Exhibitors***

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Messersmith Biomass Wood Boilers  
Northcentral Technical College, Antigo  
R & R Insurance  
SII Dry Kilns

# Thank you

***Thank You to the following who donated items to our 2024 Winter Meeting Auction:***

Stella-Jones  
Bob Kloes  
Larry Krueger, Krueger Lumber  
Jennifer Lu  
Green Bay Packers Organization  
Scott Shaver  
Hilton Appleton Paper Valley Hotel  
Hardwood Market Report

Fleet Farm  
Hardwood Review  
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Woodies Sunglasses  
Milwaukee Brewers Organization  
Hic Sticks LLC  
Quality One Woodwork/Rockland Flooring

## WINTER MEETING WRAP-UP

LSLA's 2024 Winter Meeting was held on January 17-19 in Appleton, WI. The Wednesday evening Welcome Reception sponsored by Granite Valley Forest Products provided opportunity to network, socialize and meet with customers and suppliers.

Thursday morning kicked off with a delicious breakfast, then moved into the meeting with sessions on The Current Market and Outlook for U.S. Hardwood Exports, WI DATCP Updates, Carbon Credit Panel Discussions and informative information from the WI Paper Council. Our legislative consultants from MI and WI gave reports on issues affecting our industry at the state level, and Dana Cole from the Hardwood Federation reported on issues at the federal level.

Following lunch the annual business meeting and election was held. Three new members were elected to the LSLA Board of Directors (Kate Miller, Northern Hardwoods/JMLongyear, Bill Millard, Granite Valley Forest Products/Rockbridge Sawmill, and Michael Skenadore, Menominee Tribal Enterprises). One member of the LSLA Education Board was reelected (Scott Lyon, WI DNR). After the annual business meeting, sessions continued with updates and discussions on the Real American Hardwood Coalition, the Hardwood Market Report and to end the

day, Scott Lyon from the WI DNR spoke on air permits.

Thursday evening was the cocktail hour, followed by dinner, award presentations, and our annual bucket raffle and auction, which was a success. We had many kind and generous individuals and companies who donated items for the auction. All those who donated items for the auction are listed in this issue of *The Log*.

The award presentations at the Thursday dinner were awarded to the following:

Carl Danielson Scholarship:

Sagola Hardwoods, Ltd.

Al Andersen Memorial Attendee Award:

Nels Huse, Menominee Tribal Enterprises

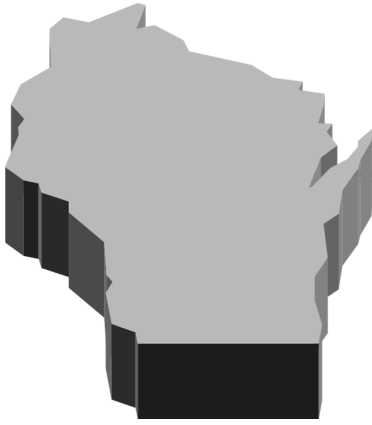
Golf Outing (2 free registrations):

Mike Penner, Breeze Dried, Inc.

To all the attendees, we want to say "Thank You"! We hope each of you found the meeting very enjoyable and informative.

To each of our sponsors and donators listed in this issue, we want to say "THANK YOU" for making our meeting a success. It would not have happened without your generosity.





# Wisconsin Legislative Report

## By Amy Boyer, WI Legislative Consultant

### ARIP Grants Now Available

The Agricultural Road Improvement Program (ARIP) was created last year in 2023 Wisconsin Act 13 and funded as part of the state biennial budget. This program, which is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, will provide \$150 million in grants to local governments to accelerate the improvement of deteriorating local roads, bridges and culverts in rural communities.

Priority will be given to projects that provide the greatest economic impact for the agriculture and timber industries. For a municipality to qualify for a grant under the program, a route or structure must have been posted for weight at least one month in the previous year, be maintained by a local government and provide access to agricultural lands or facilities, including forestry producers.

Applications for the first round of funding must be submitted to WisDOT by April 5. It is anticipated that the awards will be announced in July 2024. The second round of funding is expected mid/late 2024.

For additional information from WisDOT including links to the application go to [wisconsindot.gov](http://wisconsindot.gov) and search for (ARIP).

### Overweight Truck Permits

The Wisconsin State Assembly unanimously passed via voice vote Assembly Bill 511 on January 18. This bill adds an additional ten routes to the existing network of Michigan Border Permit timber routes. This consensus legislation will continue to help our Wisconsin businesses operate more efficiently and safely. The Lake States Lumber Association works every session along with the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to identify routes that will have the greatest impact on the timber industry. The Senate companion bill, SB 484 has been referred out of Committee on a 5-0 vote and is available for scheduling on the Senate floor.

Please reach out to your Senator to urge them to pass this legislation before the Senate adjourns on March 12. You can find your Senator at [www.maps.legis.wisconsin.gov](http://www.maps.legis.wisconsin.gov).



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# Michigan Legislative Report

## By Scott Everett, MI Legislative Consultant



**Gov's \$80.7B Budget Called 'Return To Normal'**  
Gov. Gretchen WHITMER has proposed her FY 2025 \$80.7 billion budget recommendations which comes in 1.2 percent lower than the record-setting \$81.66 billion FY 2024 budget. The budget was called a "return to normal" by State Budget Director Jen FLOOD.

### 54-54

The Michigan House of Representatives is currently tied. 54 Democrats and 54 Republicans resulting from the departure of two Democrats during the last election. April 16 is the General Election for the two seats, until this time legislation passing the House has to be done on a bi-partisan basis.

### Early Voting Is Underway

For the first time in Michigan, early voting us underway as Michiganders participate in the presidential primary.

Voters supported nine days of early voting through the passage of Proposal 2 of 2022. For this election, voters can go to their local early voting site to cast a ballot from Saturday, February 17 to Sunday, February 25. The presidential primary is February 27.

## The Real American Hardwood Coalition Update (RAHC) Get Real with us!



### Real American Hardwood | 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 effort to promote Real American Hardwood products. What's in

store for 2024? Watch the RAHC's latest video to find out.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?si=z7M7mMdBd67nGxWz&v=kwaBd2-wsno&feature=youtu.be>

## Hardwood Federation Update (cont'd)

### By Dana Lee Cole, Executive Director



which will be necessary for even a chance of getting the bill folded into the Farm Bill. Ask current Senate members to sponsor a companion bill...and ask House members to add their name as a co-sponsor to the bill. Copy/paste the following URL into your browser: <https://mstr.app/da3bcdb3-e93e-4c5c-9ae1-a6d84058748f>

will share items related to taxes and transportation.

Or you can check out our website [www.hardwoodfederation.com](http://www.hardwoodfederation.com) for information on all the key issues we are tracking.

Be on the lookout for Hardwood Federation e-mails and texts providing you with additional opportunities to reach out directly to your members of Congress on these and other legislative actions. Next month we



The LSLA Education Board of Directors met in January at the annual winter meeting and had a discussion on hosting a Spanish speaking class for lumber grading. The board is willing to move forward to hire a translator to work with us to do this training seminar that would take place at the NTC Wood Technology Center in Antigo, WI. NTC would provide this service to our association and the class would take place

in June if we have enough interest.

Please contact LSLA at (920) 884-0409 or email at [lsla@lsla.com](mailto:lsla@lsla.com) if you would be interested in having employees participate in the class.

Tim Kassis, President  
 LSLA Education

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## LSLA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**March 20, 2024**

Boarding Meeting - Madison, WI

**May 2024 (date TBD)**

Board Meeting and Fish Fry - Lansing, MI

**June 18-20, 2024**

Lumber Grading Class - Antigo, WI

**July 24 & 25, 2024**

Golf Outing—Minocqua, WI

*Watch for details of these and other upcoming events*



# Northcentral Technical College Wood Olympics

## By: Logan Wells, NTC Wood Science

On Wednesday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, Northcentral Technical College (NTC) will host their second annual Wood Olympics at the Wood Technology Center of Excellence in Antigo, Wisconsin. Students interested in learning about the forest products industry and woodworking are encouraged to sign up. Last year we had 44 students participate and the goal this year is 60! Recruiting talented young people is vital to the survival of our industry. This exciting, one-day event provides students the opportunity to explore careers and learn how NTC can help them develop industry needed skills.

Teams of students participate in different challenges and tests related to wood manufacturing. Competition events include woodworking, wood species and product ID, equipment ID, wood science trivia, and a measurements and quality control test. For instance, some of the specific challenges in the measurements and QC competition are using a log scaling stick to determine the board footage of a log and taking critical measurements on a piece of flooring to determine if it's within tolerance with a caliper.

After lunch, the grand finale takes place **Career Fair Bingo**. In this event, students race against the clock to interview companies and learn about different careers. Each student has a bingo card with different jobs listed on it that they need to get crossed off by visiting with a company employing someone doing that occupation. Students need to introduce themselves, ask set questions about the company and what skills are needed in that role. It is a very engaging career fair, like none you have ever seen before!

If you're thinking this sounds like a great event and want to help, here are a few ideas to get involved.

### #1: Help spread the word

If you can share this event with your local school guidance counselor or shop teacher and encourage them to be involved that would be fantastic. The local connection and support you provide could make the difference between a school sending a team or not.

### #2: Coach or mentor a team

The main reason teachers are reluctant to enter students is that they don't have time or teach all of the career skills used in this event. We have built and

share study materials for participants to prepare for this event. If you wanted to help students practice by guest speaking at your school or hosting a tour group and covering some of these career skills that would be a huge help in preparing students. By doing this you can grow the valuable relationship between you and your local school.

### #3: Be part of the career fair

Students are excited to see all the different companies and potential careers available to them, many of which they have never heard of before. Your willingness to share your story helps raise awareness about our industry and could lead to a summer employee or even a future general manager.

**\*Note:** If a student doesn't come to NTC and goes directly into the wood manufacturing workforce as a result of this event, that is a huge win! The goal is to get students started on a successful career path in this industry and if NTC can help with training at any point in their journey that is what we are here for.

A huge thank you goes out to LSLA Education, Kreg Tool Company, Milwaukee Tool Company, Rockler Woodworking and Hardware, and the Wood Technology Center Education Fund for helping to sponsor this event. If you are interested in learning more please contact Logan Wells at wells@ntc.edu or 715-348-7794 for more information.

## Sponsors





# WOOD

## Olympics & CAREER FAIR

**APRIL 17, 2024 | 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM**  
NTC'S ANTIGO CAMPUS | WOOD TECHNOLOGY CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

High school students interested in wood manufacturing and learning about the forest products industry are encouraged to register for the second annual Wood Olympics at Northcentral Technical College (NTC). This exciting, one-day event brings students together in teams of four to compete in challenges that will test their skills. Students will meet with area businesses to learn about careers in the industry and future opportunities in the field.

### Competition Events

Woodworking

Wood species and product ID

Equipment ID

Wood Science trivia

Measurements

### Team Prizes

**1ST PLACE:** \$1,200 total or \$300 per person

**2ND PLACE:** \$800 total or \$200 per person

**3RD PLACE:** \$400 total or \$100 per person

#### ADDITIONAL PRIZES, INCLUDING:

Traveling trophy, Pizza Party hosted at winning school shop, Tools, Gift cards, NTC scholarships

### Sponsors

LSLA Education  
Wood Technology Center of Education Fund



Register Today!  
Two teams  
per school.

### Registration deadline: April 5

[https://ntcforms.formstack.com/forms/woods\\_olympics\\_2024](https://ntcforms.formstack.com/forms/woods_olympics_2024)

Lunch is provided.

Limit 2 teams per school.









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