

THE LOG

December 2024 / January 2025

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LAKE STATES LUMBER ASSOCIATION

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Letter from the President

As we coast into the new year in hopes for improvement for our industry, economy and world, I reflect back on how we as an association continue to thrive. Our membership has increased over the last 3 years and our attendance at our events has maintained strong numbers. Additionally, LSLA has been well represented in DC, Lansing, Madison and heavily involved in the Real American Hardwood Coalition.

We as an association and individuals continue to push through trying times, support one another and most importantly step up when needed.

I have extreme gratitude towards all of our members, industry supporters and especially the generous folks that give their time organizing the winter meeting and fabulous golf outing. However, LSLA would not be in such a strong position moving forward without our sponsors/members throughout the years.

I eagerly look forward to continued success and better days to come for our industry. May 2025 be in everyone's favor.

Jim Maltese
Stella-Jones Corporation
LSLA President
jmaltese@stella-jones.com





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

**LSLA CALENDAR
OF EVENTS**

**Annual Winter Meeting
January 15-17, 2025
Green Bay, WI**

*Watch for details of these and other
upcoming events*

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

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- Steve Peters Director
- Peter Connor Director
- Bill Millard Director
- Rick Luokkala..... Director
- Kate Miller Director
- Michael Skenadore Director



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 Luokkala (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

Tracking Economic Contributions of Wisconsin's Forest Products Industry Prior To, During and Post Pandemic Period

By: Ram Dahal, DNR Forest Economist, Forest Product Services

Wisconsin's forest products industry is one of the leading manufacturing sectors in the state and well recognized nationally. The forest products industry supports local economies by creating jobs as well as sharing substantial portion of the state gross domestic products. However, the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted almost all economic sectors including the forest products industry. During the pandemic, state and local governments in the US reduced capacity of in-person gathering, leading to some industries to idle temporarily or close permanently. This resulted in significant cutback in employment across some industries, resulting in increased unemployment rates.

In pre-pandemic (2019), the forest products industry generated over 61,300 direct jobs and supported additional 75,600 jobs, with a total contribution of 137,000 jobs tied to the industry (Table 1). Similarly, the industry had total output of \$39.3 billion of which \$14.7 billion was value-added.

	Pre-pandemic 2019	Pandemic 2020	Post-pandemic 2021	Post-pandemic 2022
Direct jobs	61,300	58,000	57,900	57,000
Total Jobs	137,000	130,000	124,000	126,000

During the height of pandemic (2020), the industry lost over 3,300 direct jobs and over 3,600 supporting jobs. Direct gross output decreased by \$64 million compared to pre-pandemic. Supporting industries (indirect effect) and household spending (induced effect) were more affected during the pandemic. In total, the forest products industry output decreased by over \$800 million.

The impact of the pandemic was still seen in 2021. The total economic contribution of the industry decreased by 4.8% in employment (over 6,000 jobs), and 1.3% in total output (over \$500 million). Nonetheless, the industry experienced positive growth in terms of value-added prior to, during and post-pandemic.

In 2022, the industry performed better in its total economic contribution to the state compared to pre-pandemic level in all categories except for total employment. The industry generated 57,000 direct jobs and supported additional 69,000 jobs (indirect effect). Transportation and warehousing sector benefited most from the forest products industry generating around 8,100 indirect jobs followed by health care and social services (8,000 jobs), wholesale trade (7,700 jobs) and retail trade (6,400). The industry total output was \$42 billion (6.4% increment compared to pre-pandemic) and associated value-added was \$16 billion (8.4% increment compared to pre-pandemic).

Some of the forestry sectors were more impacted than others during the pandemic. For example, upholstered household furniture sector lost around 640 jobs, paper mills lost over 625 jobs, and wood windows and door manufacturing sector lost over 400 jobs. However, some sectors, such as sanitary paper products, were in high demand. This sector added over 60 jobs during pandemic.

While the COVID-19 pandemic brought major changes to the Wisconsin economy, resulting in the loss of over 11,000 total jobs (4,000 direct and 7,000 indirect and induced), the magnitude was not as significant as the Great Recession from 2007 to 2009. Although the industry is struggling to return job numbers to pre-pandemic level, it has begun to recover in terms of value-added and output. In 2022, the industry contributed \$42 billion to the state economy, surpassing the pre-pandemic level (\$39 billion). The industry continues to play a significant role to the state economy and balancing economic interests with sustainable forest management efforts is key to ensuring its long-term viability.

For the most up-to-date information on forest products industry economic benefits to county and state economy visit the DNR website at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/forestbusinesses/factsheets>.



LAKE STATES LUMBER ASSOCIATION

2025 Winter Meeting

January 15-17, 2025

Hotel Northland

Green Bay, WI

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

WEDNESDAY January 15 (*Registration and distribution of election ballots 5 – 8 pm*)

5:00 pm - 8:00 pm **Welcome Reception:** (The Alley) Hors d'oeuvres, 3 Free Drink Tickets and Cash Bar

THURSDAY January 16 (*Registration and distribution of election ballots 6:30 am – 4 pm*)

6:30 am - 7:30 am **Breakfast** (Crystal Ballroom)

7:50 am - 8:00 am **Welcome** - Larry Krueger, Krueger Lumber (Crystal Ballroom)

8:00 am - 8:45 am **The Current Market and Outlook for US Hardwood Exports** - Mike Snow, Executive Director, American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC)

8:45 am - 9:50 am **Industry Highlights Panel Discussion** - Randi Dodgson, Michigan Technological University; Kari Divine, Renewable Resource Solutions; Logan Wells, Northcentral Technical College

9:50 am - 10:00 am **Trees for Tomorrow** - Cheryl Todea

10:00 am - 10:20 am **Update on Australia Market Opportunity for Wisconsin Hardwood, WI DATCP** - Mark Rhoda-Reis, Bureau Director, Export and Business Development Bureau, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

10:20 am - 10:30 am **Phyto Sanitary Update for Export** - Greg Helmbrecht, Plant Pest & Disease Specialist, Advanced Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

10:30 am - 10:33 am **MI DNR** - Matt Watkeys

10:33 am - 10:45 am **Break**

10:45am - 11:45 am **Updates: Hardwood Federation** - Dana Lee Cole, Executive Director, Hardwood Federation
Legislative Reports - Scott Everett, LSLA Michigan Legislative Consultant;
Amy Boyer, LSLA Wisconsin Legislative Consultant

11:45 am - 12:30pm **Resources for Workplace Safety through WisCon** - Danica Harrier, WisCon

12:30 pm - 1:15 pm **Lunch**

1:15 pm - 2:00 pm **Election of Directors and Business Meeting**

2:00 pm - 2:27 pm **Real American Hardwood Coalition Update** - Jim Maltese, Stella-Jones and Ian Faight, Hardwood Manufacturers Association

2:27 pm to 2:30 pm **WI DNR** - Scott Lyon

2:30 pm - 2:45 pm **Break**

2:45 pm - 3:45 pm **Hardwood Market Update** - David Caldwell, HMR

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm **LSLA Education Board Meeting** (Tamarack Room)

5:00 pm - 6:30 pm **Cocktail Hour** - Cash Bar will be open 5 – 9 pm (The Alley/Crystal Ballroom)



LAKE STATES LUMBER ASSOCIATION

**2025 Winter Meeting
January 15-17, 2025**

**Hotel Northland
Green Bay, WI**

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm** **Banquet Dinner Served** (Crystal Ballroom)
- 7:30 pm - 8:00 pm** **Announcement of Award Recipients:**
 Carl Danielson Scholarship; Al Andersen Memorial Award;
 Golf Outing Certificate; Sponsor Prize Drawing;
 Louis Larkin Chicquette Memorial Scholarship "Lumber Lou"
- 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm** **Live Auction & Bucket Raffle Drawings**
 Our eleventh annual after dinner auction to fund LSLA's Hardwood Federation dues

FRIDAY January 17

- 8:20 am - 8:30 am** **Board of Directors photo**
- 8:30 am - 11:30 am** **Board of Directors meeting** (Tamarack Room)

EARLY REGISTRATION (*deadline January 2*)

Members: \$190/person attending all or any portion of the event; \$100 for spouse/family member.

Non-Members: \$300/person attending all or any portion of the event.

Register and pay not later than Monday, Dec. 23, 2024 to be eligible for the drawing for LSLA 2025 Golf Outing Free Admission Certificates!
The winner will receive two (2) certificates (approximate value \$600) to attend the 2025 LSLA Summer Golf Outing.

Early registration fee refundable in full if cancellation notification received not later than Thursday, Dec. 27, 2024. Contact LSLA office: (920) 884-0409; (906) 875-3724 (fax); lsla@lsla.com

REGISTRATION AFTER JANUARY 2 AND AT THE EVENT

Members: \$200/person attending all or any portion of the event; \$110 for spouse/family member.

Non-Members: \$350/person attending all or any portion of the event.

Registration Area open Wednesday, Jan. 15, 5 pm - 8 pm and Thursday, Jan. 16, 6:30 am - 4 pm

**Registration form can be found on the website
www.lsla.com or contact the office at (920) 884-0409 or email
lsla@lsla.com to have a form emailed to you.**

Hardwood Federation Update

By Dana Lee Cole, Executive Director



The 2025 Congressional Line Up

As expected, the Congressional calendars for the 119th Congress came out the first week of December and based on the number of days that Congress has penciled in to be in Washington, 2025 is looking to be a very busy year. The typical cadence for Members of Congress is to parachute into D.C. late Monday or early Tuesday. Starting Tuesday, they attend committee hearings and markups, fundraise, cast votes and then, when the lure of jet fumes becomes too much to bear, call it a wrap on Thursday and head back home Thursday afternoon. According to the new calendars, that will not be the case next year. There will be a number of Fridays where both Houses are in session and incoming Senate Majority Leader Thune has been telling his colleagues to prepare for weekend work as well. We shall see, but the incoming leadership has identified a number of consequential, challenging policy issues to address—some of which are discussed below—and maximizing their time in Washington will be essential to make meaningful progress on any of them.

Tax

As we have noted many times over the course of this year, 2025 is shaping up to be historic in the tax space. Tax lobbyists that we attend meetings with are dubbing 2025 as the “Super Bowl of Tax” and “Taxmageddon.” While we anticipated that tackling expired and expiring business tax benefits would be the first item out of the gate next year as part of a budget reconciliation package, it appears that President-elect Trump and Republican leadership are going to first pursue some of the other issues on which he campaigned. Incoming Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) announced in early December that he would like to see the outlines of a budget reconciliation bill within the first 30 days after President-elect Trump takes office. According to leadership staff we have spoken to, the GOP will pursue two distinct reconciliation packages next year. The first will focus on energy, border security and military readiness/defense. Specifics on policies that will fall into these tranches are not yet clear. The second package will focus singularly on tax and extending the business tax benefits enacted by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA).

As we have noted, the appeal of using the budget reconciliation process is that it circumnavigates the 60-vote threshold in the Senate--meaning that only a sim-

ple majority is needed to clear the upper chamber. As Republicans will hold 53 Senate seats in the 119th Congress, these measures are certain to pass barring any GOP defections. Reconciliation has fairly strict parameters but has been used often in situations where one party controls both chambers of Congress and the White House.

The Hardwood Federation’s priorities in the second reconciliation bill will be restoring the full expensing tax benefit that has been phasing out over the last few years and is scheduled to take another 20 percent haircut in January. The plan is to restore 100 percent bonus depreciation back to 100 percent and do so retroactively. The other piece is reviving and extending the research and development (R&D) tax credit. As part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), the ability of businesses to fully expense R&D costs in the same year those costs were incurred expired in 2022. Currently, those R&D costs have to be amortized over a 5-year period—essentially making investments in your business more expensive. Again, the plan is to restore and extend full expensing of R&D costs and make restoration of this key tax benefit retroactive. Also riding on this second train will be extending the 20 percent tax deduction for S-Corporations and other pass-through tax structures. This benefit was also put in place by the TCJA in an effort to introduce some semblance of tax parity between the rate larger C corporations negotiated and that which is assessed to smaller Main Street businesses. Unfortunately, this benefit expires at the end of 2025 and its extension is critical. To provide perspective, 62 percent of all private sector jobs are anchored by pass-through businesses. To put a finer point on it, 88 million people in this country show up for work every day at a business that is structured as a pass-through. It is a tax structure that is popular in our sector and the Hardwood Federation team will be working with our allies in the business community and Congress next year to ensure that this deduction is carried forward.

Farm Bill

It is a virtual certainty that last year around this time we wrote that the Farm Bill would be a top priority in the coming year and that action on reauthorizing legislation was imminent. Regrettably, we are in the unfortunate position of having to write that same sentence again one year later. The politics simply did not align

Continued on next page

Hardwood Federation Update (cont'd)

By Dana Lee Cole, Executive Director



between Democrats and Republicans this year on a Farm Bill rewrite. Party leadership remained so far apart on spending priorities that forging consensus was unachievable. Efforts are now underway in the Lame Duck session of Congress to extend the current Farm Bill for one year and, according to sources we have spoken to, even those negotiations over an extension are not proceeding smoothly. But hope springs eternal and we anticipate that new leadership—potentially on both the Agriculture Committees—will yield different results in the new Congress. Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) will be new in the Ranking Member slot on the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee. She and incoming Chairman John Boozman (R-AR) have a good working relationship, and both have proven to be champions on key issues to the forestry and forest products sectors. In the House, Chairman GT Thompson (R-PA) will continue on as Chairman, but there is heated competition for the Ranking Member post. The current Ranking Member on the House Agriculture Committee is Rep. David Scott (D-GA), but he is being challenged by moderate Democrats Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA) and Rep. Angie Craig (D-MN). This issue will be settled before Congress leaves for the year.

While a new Farm Bill was not enacted in 2024, it was not an “all for naught” exercise. Many provisions that surfaced in the House and Senate Farm Bill proposals were positive, including legislative language that would have doubled funding for the Market Access and Foreign Market Development Programs. Legislators also showed their support for grant programs at the Department of Agriculture that incentivize innovative wood product manufacturing and renewable heat and power projects that provide offtake for our sawmill residuals. The House Agriculture Committee-passed bill also includes forestry and forest products workforce development provisions that will help enhance the supply of trained employees that can work in our sawmills. The Hardwood Federation advocacy team looks to build on this progress in 2025 and we remain optimistic that a new Farm Bill will be signed into law sometime next year.

Trade

The President-elect’s campaign rhetoric over the last year or so has been pretty consistent on the international trade front. He has vowed that from Day One of his second Presidency he plans to get tough with our

trading partners and rely heavily on his favorite tool to level the international playing field—tariffs. As we are all painfully aware, the hardwood industry was dealt a devastating blow during the first Trump Administration when China imposed retaliatory tariffs on our hardwood products destined for markets there. The effect of these tariffs was felt literally overnight as export demand dropped off the table. The Hardwood Federation team, working with our Executive Committee, has been in frequent talks since the election on ways to prepare for a tariff war should one materialize. It is difficult to ascertain at this point whether the President-elect is using the threat of tariffs simply to bring our trading partners to the negotiating table or if he really is preparing to impose tariffs on China, Mexico, Canada and European Union countries in January. We are preparing for the latter and are in the process of communicating with the President-elect’s transition team and key Members of Congress about the devastating effects tariffs would have on our sector. We will keep you regularly apprised of developments in this space and will be calling on you to help in our advocacy efforts should the tariff threat become a reality.

There will of course be many other policy issues that surface next year, but these three are top of mind for the Federation and the ones for which we are preparing. The new Congress—the 119th—will gavel in January 3 when newly elected Members are sworn in and then the action starts. As always, the Federation team is here and engaged and will be communicating developments regularly as the Congressional and new Administration’s agenda takes shape.



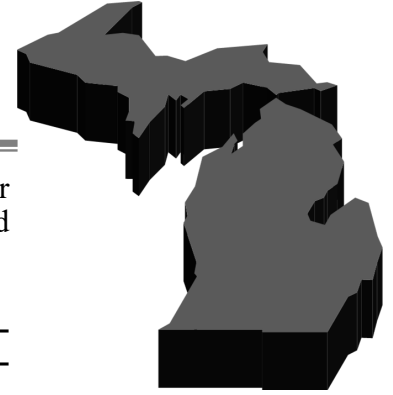
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Michigan Legislative Report

By Scott Everett, MI Legislative Consultant



November Elections

Republican's take Majority of Michigan House 58-52 for 2025-26. No election for the Senate this year means Democrats remain the Majority in the Senate 20-18. Tom Barrett flipped the Michigan 7th Congressional District from D to R.

Lame Duck

As of this writing, Lame Duck session WAS running at full tilt with Democrats positioning hundreds of bills to pass before December 31. However, recently things ground to a halt. A combination of all of the Republicans leaving the chamber along with internal disagreements within the Democratic Caucus, at this time there are not 56 votes in the House to pass anything. Either the Democrats will get it together, or this legislative session has already ended, time will tell.

UI Benefit Increase Headed To Governor

Senate bills that raise the weekly financial benefits one can receive from unemployment and increase the amount of time a person is eligible for the benefits passed the legislature, making the governor's signature the only thing stopping the change. The legislature approved the \$362 to \$614 increase that an unemployed person would qualify for by 2027 after a series of annual, incremental increases. Part of the package also extends the unemployment eligibility period from 20 weeks to 26 weeks.

Paid Family Leave Moved Out Of Senate Committee, Requires Payroll Contributions

Michigan workers will have up to 12 weeks of paid family leave benefits, funded through payroll contributions, providing them with payments while they're caring for new children or ailing family members, under legislation moved by the Senate Housing and Human Services Committee. Sen. Erika GEISS (D-Taylor)'s SB 332 and SB 333 moved on a party-line vote.

Wait Staff Pushing To 'Save Our Wage'

Recently about 500 wait staff advocating to prevent the elimination of Michigan's tipped wage stuffed the Capitol Building and loudly chanted as Republican lawmakers attempt to make a deal on the issue. "Save Our Wage" echoed through the halls as servers chanted outside the Senate chambers and around the rotunda in hopes that the Legislature will stop a measure that will gradually move them to a minimum wage

salary, which they fear will cost them money and possibly their job.

Republicans Cast Michigan's 15 Electoral College Votes For Trump

Michigan Republicans recently cast all of Michigan's 15 Electoral College votes for President-elect Donald TRUMP. In Michigan, the presidential candidate winning the state's popular vote receives all of its Electoral College votes, which altogether determines who wins the White House. If a Democrat wins, then Democratic electors nominated by the Michigan Democratic Party meet to cast the Electoral College certificates, and vice versa if a Republican wins.

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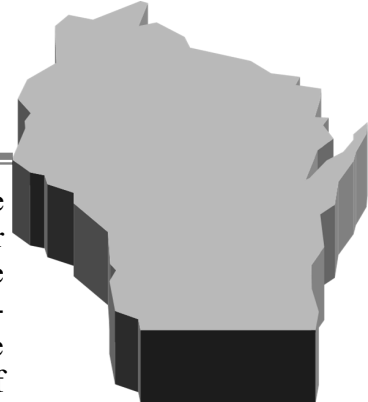
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Wisconsin Legislative Report

By Amy Boyer, WI Legislative Consultant

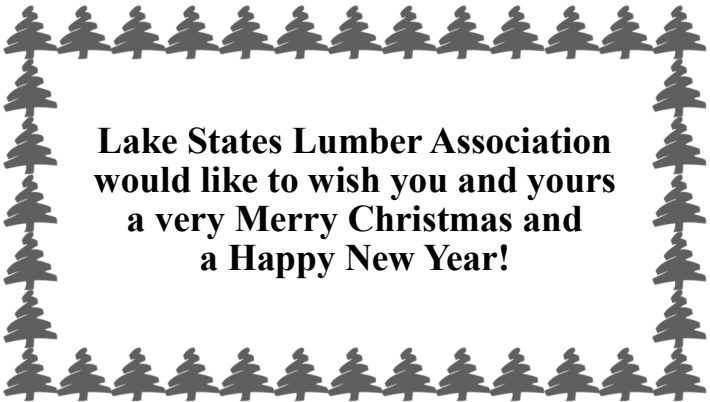


2025-26 Wisconsin Legislative Session

Another election cycle has passed, the relentless stream of political ads are gone and we are going to see many new faces in the State Capitol for the 2025-26 Wisconsin legislative session. Republican majorities in both houses will be significantly smaller mainly due to new legislative district maps that gave Democrats an opportunity to pick up seats in both houses. Assembly Republicans will come back with a 54-45 majority after losing ten seats in the November elections. Senate Republicans will be back with a 18-15 majority after losing four seats, and there is widespread speculation that Democrats could take the majority in the Senate after the 2026 elections. As of this writing, committee assignments have not been released in either house, however, we do expect that Rep. Jeff Mursau (R-Crivitz) will continue to Chair the Assembly Forestry Committee.

mitting haulers to utilize electronic permits for overweight loads. We are also in the process of planning a Forestry Day at the Capitol in the spring of 2025. Stay tuned for additional information.

Looking ahead to the upcoming legislative session, the LSLA Board is in the process of developing its proactive legislative agenda including expanding overweight truck routes for forestry products and per-



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a very Merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year!**

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



Real American Hardwood Advertising Campaign Exceeds Expectations

Over the past two years, the Real American Hardwood Coalition (RAHC) united the collective efforts of the hardwood industry, engaged with creative minds and entertainment partners, and launched its Build Your World® advertising campaign—the industry's first-ever, collaborative national advertising campaign targeting consumers. And the numbers are in.

During two, six-month runs spanning the second halves of 2023 and 2024, the Build Your World campaign produced:

- 116.4 million impressions on the Magnolia Network
- 33.1 impressions on Meta (Instagram + Facebook)
- 7.4 million impressions on YouTube
- 14.3 million impressions on the Google Display Network
- 627,000 impressions via Google Search

For those counting, that's approaching 172 million combined impressions across the various TV, social, and digital platforms. While the results of the campaign are impressive and outperformed expectations,

there's more work to be done.

Entering year three of the Build Your World campaign, the RAHC's messaging will shift from the previous awareness and engagement stages to the consideration stage—ultimately influencing decisions when it's time for consumers to purchase flooring, cabinetry, furniture, and millwork to bring into their homes. And as you may have guessed, this is the most critical stage of the campaign and the RAHC is working to ensure Real American Hardwood is the natural choice.

In addition to continuing advertisements on the Magnolia Network, social, and digital platforms in 2025, the RAHC is adding a new tool to its website at realamericanhardwood.com that'll help visitors source Real American Hardwood products to purchase. That's right, if you're a secondary manufacturer producing finished goods, your company will have an opportunity to capitalize on the Build Your World campaign's success and gain new customers.

As the industry continues to navigate an uncertain economy and seeks to reclaim market share from alternative, wood-look products, the need for increased and consistent promotion and education has never been more apparent. No other product shares Real American Hardwood's natural beauty, dependable performance, lasting value, healthy home attributes, or environmental story. Now is the time to support the RAHC and Build Your World for a sustainable future—for your company and the industry as a whole.

To learn more about the RAHC and its work to promote Real American Hardwood products and educate consumers and design professionals, visit realamericanhardwood.com/industry.

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Where is David Bradley?

This year, David Bradley helped us cut down our Christmas tree so fast, the squirrels barely had time to pack their suitcases! From everyone at McDonough, Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays! May your season be as sharp as our saws and as full of cheer as a kid who just found the last cookie!



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