

MFPA Logging School

Ready To Launch!!

We are very excited to announce the official launch of MFPA's logging school that will host its first class beginning October 1, 2017. Between now and October a great deal of work has to be accomplished to ensure that the program will be successful and meet the expectations of Missouri's forest products industry. Fred Smith, MFPA's newly hired Logging School Manager will begin his duties on April 21 and he will have his hands full running this new program.

Fred Smith comes to MFPA with a unique background; he spent about 20 years in the computer support industry, but always has been connected to the wood industry through family ties. Fred has spent countless hours working with his uncle, Albert Cleve, founder of Botkin Lumber Company, and he clearly understands and respects the importance of the wood industry to Missouri. Working for Sun Microsystems and Oracle, Fred worked independently and learned that being very well organized was key to his success. "I was really impressed with Fred during the interview process and feel confident that he will be an excellent manager of the logging school. He is a seasoned professional that will have an organized approach to recruitment, will interact well with our membership, and be able to work independently from his home office in Van Buren. Albert Cleve is a mentor of mine, a man that I have learned so much from, and the fact that Fred has had the opportunity to also learn from Albert, makes me even more confident about his abilities" says Executive Director Brian Brookshire.



The school will be conducted at The Camp at Lake Wappapello, formerly known as University Forest, which is located in northern Butler County. We are very fortunate to have a contract with the new ownership of the facility at Lake Wappapello. The facility has a dormitory, dining hall, classroom, shop and is surrounded by thousands of acres of MDC property, a portion of which can be used for the field instruction of the school. The school is expected to last 10 consecutive weeks and the students will be in class Monday-Friday. "Bringing the school under the MFPA umbrella allows us to offer an intensive 10 week program that will train students in the profession of logging, both in the classroom and in the field, and they will graduate with a skill that will be a true benefit to our industry. It also provides us the opportunity to provide a focused education that students will actually use upon graduation" says Brookshire.

We need your help, PLEASE! We have about 5 months to recruit students (12 is the target) for our first class, shore up partnerships for use of logging equipment, and solidify commitments for instruction. MFPA has been working on these items for some time but Fred will be responsible for finalizing the school details. In the coming weeks Fred will be reaching out to members in an effort to seek local support for our recruiting efforts. Please consider helping Fred identify local civic and education leaders that we can contact to spread the word about our new logging school. Industry participation in the new logging school is critical to the long term success of the program. The initial launch of the program within MFPA was made possible by a very generous financial commitment on the part of an individual member. However, this is seed money to get the program started; long term success will be dependent on student enrollment and overall industry support. Industry sponsorship for the program, which can be structured in many different ways, will help keep tuition costs for students as low as possible.

We believe MFPA's logging school is a unique opportunity to train people in the profession of logging and respond to a real need facing our industry. This is an exciting opportunity, yet a little scary, but we are committed to making this program a true success.