MFPA Participates in Hardwood Promotion Discussions

The downward spiral of the grade lumber market, particularly for red oak, has prompted discussions among hardwood producers and Association Executives on how to create a domestic promotion campaign for “Real American Hardwood”. Executive Director Brian Brookshire has participated in a recent meeting of his state and national counterparts, along with industry leadership, to begin developing a strategy for domestic promotion. Below is the Executive Summary developed by the hardwood promotion coalition.

Hardwood Promotion Collaboration Discussion
August 16-17, 2019
Atlanta, GA
Executive Summary

Issue

The U.S. hardwood industry is facing significant change driven by a variety of factors, including stiff competition from vinyl, plastic, ceramic and concrete products, a slowing world economy, continued misleading campaigns about the sustainability of wood products aimed at both the public and policy makers, and the ongoing U.S. trade war with China. Markets are shrinking and businesses are looking towards an uncertain future.

The U.S. hardwood industry has a wonderful story to tell…the beauty and desirability of the products, the history of the industry, the small family business focus, the sustainability of our raw material, and the environmental and health benefits of using hardwood. However, the industry has not yet been successful in developing a coordinated and collaborative initiative to promote the true story and science-based benefits of real American hardwood. This has allowed our competitors and adversaries to frame public opinion and gain the advantage.

Call to Action

In order to start the process of developing a collaborative effort to promote the use of real American hardwood to consumers, a small group of hardwood association executives came together to brainstorm ideas and approaches. From this conversation came a larger meeting in Atlanta on August 16-17, 2019 with 19 hardwood association executives and association board members to further consider actions that the entire industry could participate in and benefit from.

The group agreed a priority is to move forward in a way that is open and engages all members of the hardwood community…receiving input and recognizing the differences of various industry segments. The many unique aspects of the hardwood industry were identified and it was acknowledged that different industry segments may have different, yet complimentary, promotional needs.

Proposed Action

During the conversations in Atlanta it became clear that the first thing we as an industry must do is to assess our current marketing resources, including existing promotion, research projects, advocacy

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WELCOME NEW MFPA MEMBERS

Company: Hinterlands Forestry LLC
Contact: Jeffrey Harris
Phone: (618) 401-2295
Email: hinterlandsforestry@gmail.com
County: Saint Louis City

Company: Komplete Tree Kare & Forestry Production LLC
Contact: Matt Hilbert
Phone: (816) 699-5723
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efforts, and data related to consumer trends and competing product availability. Once we know what we have, we can identify what we need. This information will help us develop the strong brand statement we will need to effectively promote hardwood products. The effort to collect this information has already begun.

The second priority, closely related to the first, is to identify university architecture and design school courses and competitions related to the use of hardwood. Once identified, we can share existing educational materials and recommend industry experts willing to participate in classroom presentations.

Third, and probably most importantly, we must also identify and welcome all those who have an interest in working with us…and creating a process that encourages and allows engagement in different yet complimentary ways. A team has been identified to draft communication materials that can be widely shared at industry meetings over the next several months. Future meetings (to be scheduled soon) will be open to interested associations and companies alike. And communications about strategy development and implementation will be available to all.

The task before us all, as members of the U.S. hardwood industry, is not an easy one. However, there is great optimism that if we can work together, we can overcome the obstacles we face.

Please email Brian Brookshire at brian@moforest.org your questions/comments/concerns about the coalitions direction so that he can convey them to the group.

-Brian Brookshire, Executive Director
Shannon Jarvis can add another feather to his cap. The Missouri Master Logger and Chairman of the Missouri Logging Council is now the 26th President of the American Loggers Council. The ALC is made up of 34 states, and represents 50,000 loggers. According to Shannon, his presidency will focus on executing ALC’s “five year plan,” with the goal of strengthening its status as a national organization and an influential voice in forestry and natural resources. The same kind of voice that MFPA and the Missouri Logging Council offers to Missouri loggers. To make that voice as strong as possible, Shannon wants loggers to get involved…in MFPA, ALC, and any opportunities that arise. He hopes to attract more individuals to the timber industry; improve public relations and views on the timber industry; and build the Master Logger program, promote it, and help recognize the loggers who are doing the right thing. Shannon was inducted late September at the meeting in Orange Beach, Alabama. It is a tradition the ALC annual meeting is held in the home state of the outgoing President. Next year’s ALC meeting will be held in Branson. Shannon is hoping for a lot of representation from Missouri loggers. Contact Shannon or Mark if you want more information.

Hey there…yes…it is reminder time. As the year comes to a close, remember that your PTH certification will too. If you haven’t done it already…get your CE Credit. If you need the credit, you still have some time before your certification ends December 31, 2019. MFPA offers a variety of ways to obtain CE credits. On our website, under the Education tab, you can click on Training Schedule. Once there, you will see that there are some online opportunities. There are DVD’s, online Modules, and listings of events or classes. Some of these programs will cost, while others are free. The website will list costs, if there are any.

You can still receive CE credits by attending a program, training or event related to the industry. Examples of this can include safety training, an MFPA meeting, or a Trade Show. If CE credit is not completed, your name will be removed from the Certified PTH Logger list until your certification has been renewed. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to ask.

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Why Your Attendance at the Winter Meeting is Important

The MFPA Winter Meeting and Legislative Breakfast is an important event for the forest products industry and for MFPA members to attend for a variety of reasons. The Winter Meeting is an excellent opportunity for you to talk with other MFPA members in the industry as well as develop business partnerships with associate members who offer products and services supporting industry businesses. MFPA committees plan to hold meetings during the Winter Meeting including Forest Health, Governmental & Public Affairs, PAC, Education and Technical Services, and Missouri Logging Council. Even if you are not a committee member you are welcome to attend meetings to learn of issues facing the industry and individual businesses and provide input regarding such issues. By attending these meetings you will hear of the efforts of these committees and MFPA to determine the impact on the industry and how they are combating these issues.

On January 15th The Missouri Forest Products Political Action Committee will host the annual Legislative Breakfast. MFPA Members’ presence at the Legislative Breakfast is another important reason to attend the Winter Meeting. Missouri State Legislators are invited to meet the leadership and members of the Missouri Forest Products Association over breakfast. This is an opportunity for MFPA members to talk with our elected officials and reinforce the importance of the forest products industry to the state of Missouri and gather support on issues important to our industry. Please plan to attend the MFPA Winter Meeting and Legislative Breakfast and help us promote the importance of our legislative agenda for 2020 by having a presence and a voice in the capitol.

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In 1960, a Congressional Joint Resolution by the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives passed Public Law 86-753 which provided for the establishment of an annual 7-day National Forest Products Week beginning on the third Sunday in October. America’s forests are a source of pride, and they provide crucial products and materials for our citizens and communities. As we celebrate National Forest Products Week, we recognize the importance of our forests to our economy and way of life, and we reaffirm our commitment to protecting them through wise stewardship and sensible land management. This year National Forest Products Week will be celebrated October 20-26, 2019.

“Missouri’s forest products are a vital component of the state’s economy,” according to Missouri Forest Products Association Executive Director, Brian Brookshire. Brookshire emphasized, “Forest products industries contribute about $10 billion annually to Missouri’s economy. It supports more than 41,200 jobs at a payroll of about $1.9 billion and is responsible for almost $610 million in taxes, including $77 million in state sales tax.” Missouri is home to almost 500 primary wood products producers, which includes logging and saw mills; and over 900 secondary wood products producers including furniture, millwork, cabinetry, and other consumer products.

Missouri’s forests extend over 14 million acres where three out of four trees are white oaks, red oaks, and hickories. Brookshire explained, “Missouri Forest Products Association promotes healthy and productive forests and the success and wellbeing of Missouri’s forest products industries. We believe active forest management, utilizing sound forestry principles, is the key to addressing forest health now and ensuring a healthy and sustainable forest for the future. That is why we take the time each year to celebrate and recognize the contribution of Missouri forests and forest products.”

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