



# 2020 October

Monthly newsletter of  
Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc.  
www.appalachianhardwood.org | info@appalachianhardwood.org

## Conf. Debate: Better Workers & New Markets

Attendees at the 2020 Fall Conference of Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc. said employees who want to work and new markets for hardwood products are the top issues facing Appalachian hardwood sawmills and yards.

The discussion followed presentations from regional government and college leaders and from the Real American Hardwood Promotion Coalition and the Hardwood Market Report.

The conference was held Sept. 28-30 at the Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, WV. There were 120 people participating with 85 in-person and 35 virtually.

It was the first hybrid meeting for AHMI and proved to be very successful. All were able to view the presentations, hear the dialogue and ask questions in the room or by chat.



AHMI Chairman Jay Reese welcomes group

David Hughes of the Appalachian Regional Commission opened the session by explaining the role of ARC and a new partnership with AHMI. ARC is a regional economic development agency that represents a partnership of federal, state, and local government.

The session **Growing Hardwood Jobs In Appalachia** was facilitated by Dr. Johnny Moore of Pierpont Community College in Fairmont, WV, and included a presentation by Program Director Scott Reigel of Dabney S. Lancaster Community College in Covington, VA. The two agreed that community colleges can provide technical training for the hardwood industry.

Participants challenged the speakers on the



Attendees socially distance during session

type of worker that was applying for jobs. Many noted that often candidates lack the soft skills - showing up on time, returning to the job, problem-solving and more.

Participants asked how high schools and colleges can do a better job preparing workers. Moore and Reigel agreed it was a struggle.

Moore said Pierpont incorporates these life lessons into several courses and some students understand it. Often, however, the student does not apply themselves.

Reigel said it frustrates educators as well when skills that should be taught at home are not present. The colleges do the best they can.

Executive Team members for the **Real American Hardwood Promotion** presented an update on the program. The market research has been completed and a plan is being developed for companies and associations to work together promoting the American hardwood resource to customers and industry.

Attendees asked about the research showing that sustainability was not a top factor influencing purchasing decisions. The team said these mes-

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## *The way I see it...*

By Tom Inman, AHMI President

...the first Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc. "Hybrid" Conference went very well.

We had approximately 120 people participate in the 2020 Fall Conference - 85 people on site and 35 online. We practiced social distancing and wore masks AND were able to have one reception outside.

I envision the hybrid model continuing into the future as Zoom meetings/webinars are more common. It makes sense to hold a one hour meeting online that would require people to travel for hours to participate.

We went with the hybrid to allow members under travel restrictions to join us while giving those who were not the chance to meet. AHMI held one of the last in-person meetings in February and one of the first sessions in September.

BUT there are downsides to online. You can get distracted by other people, texts or emails in your office. You also cannot connect with people as well with a sense for the way they say things.

One attendee told me they considered the online but then saw the list of registrants and there was one person they really needed to see. They could not have that interaction in an email.

Networking is a key benefit of AHMI membership. You are able to connect with owners and top management of the largest and smallest sawmills and distribution yards in the Appalachian region.

I often hear members discussing common issues like logs, freight, equipment and other needs that one owner has found a solution. It amazes me how often they are willing to share that solution with another member who is a competitor.

If you did not attend the Conference or the online session, you can view all of the presentations at [www.appalachianhardwood.org/videos](http://www.appalachianhardwood.org/videos).

If you have suggestions or want more information, please contact me at the office at (336) 885-8315 or email [tom@appalachianwood.org](mailto:tom@appalachianwood.org). I will fill you in on what I heard and saw. Get ready for 2021!



AHMI welcomes the following new member:

### Supplier

David Lindblad

Peter McCarty

TS Manufacturing

2 Fleetwood Dr

Lindsay, CANADA K9V 6H4

(705) 324-3762

[davidl@tsman.com](mailto:davidl@tsman.com) or [peterm@tsman.com](mailto:peterm@tsman.com)

New members are vital to the work of AHMI. If you know of companies that should join, please share that information with the AHMI office. We have a packet of materials that explain the promotion work, retirement plan, health insurance and meeting opportunities through membership.

## **IWF Goes Virtual Oct. 26-30**

IWF Connect! is the new online trade show and conference for the woodworking industry scheduled for Oct. 26-30.

The show was cancelled in August because of COVID-19 and replaced with this virtual event. Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc. has registered as an exhibitor.

The IWF Connect! provides hundreds of exhibitors who will be showcasing their new products and special offers. There will be presentations on woodworking trends and equipment.

Attendees will be able to live-chat with exhibitors, watch live product demos, take courses and much more. To register for free and learn details, please visit [iwfconnect.com](http://iwfconnect.com).

## **AHMI Offers Social Media**

AHMI has a Social Media specialist who can set up any/all social media account(s) for your company. The plans are set on a monthly contract and more information is available from the AHMI office. Follow us on Twitter or Instagram at [Appalachianhdwd](https://www.instagram.com/Appalachianhdwd)

## Conference from page 1

sages will be incorporated in marketing about the health benefits of hardwoods and its authenticity.

The team said RAHPC is working to make a connection with consumers early in their design process and guide their decisions. The marketing materials will be developed to bring manufacturing partners along to make products from our hardwood resource that consumers want.

"We have to help manufacturers understand the value, the appearance and the healthy home needs of their customers that we can meet with American hardwood," the presentation reported. "We have to improve our utilization of social media and influencers in telling our story."

Others asked when materials would be available and would there be details on how to use. A marketing playbook is expected in late October and will include Business to Consumer and Business to Business Strategies.

There were also questions about funding the program. The team is completing work on funding formulas that will include money from the 27 associations and voluntary contributions from industry.

The final session was a progression from the RAHPC and titled **Growing Hardwood Markets from Appalachia's Hardwoods**. David Caldwell of Hardwood Market Report gave an update on grade and industrial markets in 2020.

He said the main takeaways are that total hardwood consumption fell over 2BBF in 2020 from



**John Crites II of AWP asks about Real American Promotion plans**

2019. Another takeaway is that industrial product consumption grew as a percentage of the total in 2020 : 57.6% in 2019 to 58.9% in 2020, which means grade lumber consumption declined as a percentage of total consumption in 2020 from 42.4% in 2019 to 41.1% in 2020.

Consumption by all grade lumber markets declined sharply in 2020 from 2019. The moulding and millwork industry posted a 22.0% decrease in hardwood lumber usage; the lowest decline of any domestic grade lumber sector. Consumption by the furniture industry fell almost 30%; the cabinet industry was off 39%, and the flooring industry experienced the sharpest decrease at 41%. Clearly, COVID-19 shutdowns are the root cause of these drastic reductions., Caldwell said.

Each of the presentations and the entire program were recorded and are available online. Please visit [appalachianhardwood.org/videos](http://appalachianhardwood.org/videos) to view each.

The winners of the sporting events were:

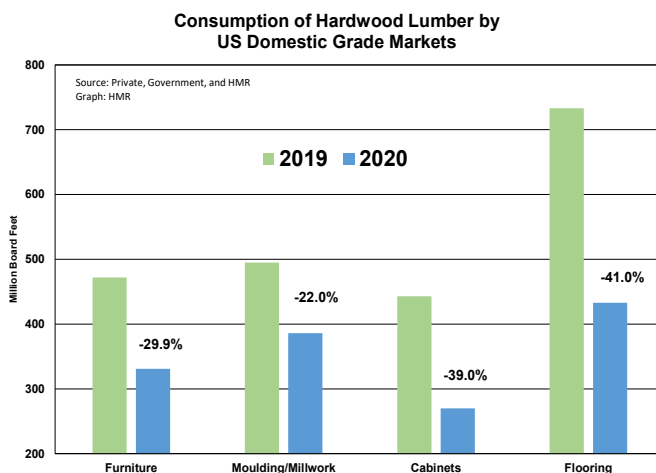
Golf: Low gross: 1st Pierre Fox; 2nd Peter McCarty; Low Net: 1st Jay Reese; 2nd Ashley Goodin; Closest to the Pin: Jay Reese; Long Drive: Gary Miller.

Sporting Clays: 1st John Crites II; 2nd Tom Plaugher; 3rd Lance Johnson.

The next conference for AHMI will be the 2021 Annual Meeting on Feb. 24-28 at the Ponte Vedra Inn in Ponte Vedra, FL. The 2021 Summer Conference is set for July 25-27 at The Greenbrier in White Sulphur Springs, WV.

More information on both events is available online at [www.appalachianhardwood.org/Meetings](http://www.appalachianhardwood.org/Meetings).

If you have questions, please contact the AHMI office at (336) 885-8315 or email [tom@appalachianwood.org](mailto:tom@appalachianwood.org).





## Real American Hardwood Promotion

AHMI is one of 27 partners in a Coalition titled "Real American Hardwood Promotion." It was formed in 2019 to identify opportunities and challenges in promoting the American hardwood industry.

The first phase of work has focused on conducting and analyzing research on why customers purchase hardwood products or competing substitutes. The research included architects, contractors, home renovators, (consumers) designers, millennials, and GenXers - to assess perceptions of hardwood attributes, as well as those of competitive products.

RAHPC goals are designed to provide the industry with a long-term vision, focus and continuous motivation. It hopes to:

- Increase domestic markets by raising awareness of Real American Hardwood.
- Enhance consumer and prosumer perception of hardwood's value. Prosumers are defined as those industry professionals who build and renovate property for themselves to sell or who contract with consumers to complete the work.
- Generate new products.
- Improve industry profitability and stability.

The research subjects gave hardwood high marks, finding it an attractive product that provides warmth and the right "look" to homes. They understood that hardwood products were durable and lifetime lasting, and "healthy for their home."

Healthy home is an interesting benefit as it allows hardwood to take advantage of the environmentally-friendly benefits in a way that is more immediately relevant to consumers – the need to care for their family.

The data shows that we have the potential to develop an unbeatable messaging strategy that can create an emotional connection with consumers. To learn more, please view the video from the 2020 Fall Conference at [appalachianhardwood.org/videos](http://appalachianhardwood.org/videos) on the Real American Hardwood Promotion.

## AHMI Event Calendar

Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc. is monitoring events and meetings to determine the best locations to promote AHMI member companies and products.

Below are the plans as of Oct. 1 for the remainder of the year. Please check with the AHMI office before you make final plans to make certain the event is still planned.

Oct. 13-21: **High Point Furniture Market**, High Point, NC

Oct. 19: **ISFD Pinnacle Awards**, High Point, NC

Nov. 10: **ALC Meeting**, Johnson City, TN

### 2021

Jan. 12: **ALC Meeting**, Asheville, NC

Feb. 8-10: **IHLA Convention**, Indianapolis, IN

Feb. 24-28: **AHMI Annual Meeting**, Ponte Vedra Inn, Ponte Vedra, FL

March 9: **ALC Meeting**, Pinehurst, NC

March 24-26: **HMA National Conference**, Austin, TX

April 17-21: **High Point Furniture Market**, High Point, NC

April 28-30: **NWFA Expo**, Baltimore, MD

May 21-23: **Expo Richmond**, Richmond, VA

If you know of events that we should consider, contact Tom Inman at [tom@appalachianwood.org](mailto:tom@appalachianwood.org) and provide details. AHMI members are invited to join Inman at the events listed above.

Follow AHMI on Twitter & Instagram for weekly updates on members, hardwood product promotion and events. Please link to:

[/twitter.com/AppalachianHdwd](https://twitter.com/AppalachianHdwd)

[/instagram/appalachianhdwd](https://instagram.com/appalachianhdwd)

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# Wildfire Relief, Management May Be On The Way

*By Dana Lee Cole, HF Executive Director*

Unfortunately, uncontrolled wildfire events out West have become about as predictable as the changing seasons each year. The trend continues in 2020 with historic fires ravaging California and Oregon, sending smoke plumes that are now seen as far away as Europe.

There is renewed focus on potential solutions to prevent wildfire and the inevitable discussion of the need for forest management. It is disappointing that it takes a tragedy and loss of life and property to drive this discussion, but at least there is bipartisan recognition of removing hazardous fuel loads and thinning overstocked stands on federal forests could help the situation.

This bipartisan recognition was on full display in mid-September at a Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing to discuss the Emergency Wildfire and Public Safety Act (S. 4431). This bill is the product of months of work between the staffs of Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT) and Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA).

The Hardwood Federation met with the staff developing this bill well over a year ago. The legislation takes a dual approach to forest management in that it includes both a supply and a demand component.

On the supply side, S. 4431 equips the U.S. Forest Service with additional tools to execute much needed forest thinning projects and landscape restoration work on federal lands. For example, one provision creates a new categorical exclusion from the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) for the removal of dead and dying trees. In addition, the bill would free the Forest Service of a court-imposed requirement from 2015 (known as the Cottonwood Decision) that it consult again with the Fish and Wildlife Service on land management plans whenever new information emerges about potential effects.

On the demand side, the proposal authorizes \$100 million in grants, loans and loan guarantees for the siting and development near federal forest lands of "biomass conversion facilities," defined

## HARDWOOD FEDERATION

in the bill as a facility that turns biomass into heat, power, advanced biofuels and/or biobased products. Inclusion of this language is a recognition that it is currently uneconomical to transport forest biomass to facilities that can use it—which are hundreds of miles from federal forest lands.

In a similar vein, Sen. Martha McSally (R-AZ), introduced the Forest Health and Biomass Energy Act. This bill also attempts to address the demand side of the forest health crisis by incentivizing biomass energy development as a method to reduce hazardous fuel build-up in fire-prone forests.

"My bill will accelerate forest restoration by reducing the cost and regulatory barriers to clearing out dangerous overgrowth and utilizing that material for carbon neutral biomass electricity," McSally said. "My bill complements the forest management policies included in the Emergency Wildfire and Public Safety Act. Our bills offer practical, cost-effective solutions to target the real root causes of these catastrophic wildfires while also supporting low carbon energy."

Among other things, McSally's legislation would direct the Administration to assess the biomass energy fuel potential in U.S. forests with a focus on identifying the most viable sources for energy use such as ladder fuels and by-products of forest restoration including branches, slash and other low-value biomass. It would also establish a fund using a percentage of timber sale revenues to assist timber operators and biomass energy producers with the collection, harvesting and transportation of biomass out of high hazard areas.

Currently, it is unclear where any of these proposals are headed. Congress will be in their states and districts through most of October and the November 3<sup>rd</sup> election. The Hardwood Federation has been monitoring these proposals and others very closely.

## White Oak Initiative Seeks Stakeholder Input

Please help the White Oak Initiative receive input by participating in the Stakeholder Feedback Presentations.

These sessions will share initial findings from the White Oak Assessment and Conservation Plan. The program will:

- Identify important topic areas to either include in the Assessment or investigate further through the Conservation Plan.
- Solicit comments, suggestions, and concerns around key takeaways and conclusions in the Assessment.
- Solicit reactions and ideas in response to the Assessment as we begin to develop the framework for the Conservation Plan based off both the information presented in the Assessment and the stakeholder's own knowledge and experiences.

There are two rounds of presentations so select from the dates below:

- **Wed. 10/14 from 10:30–11:30 AM EST**
- **Thursday 10/15 from 1 – 2 PM EST**

If you are unable to join the webinar, there will be recordings available. Please complete a **Stakeholder Feedback Survey** which will be sent to you via email along with the recording.

Please email [cwilson@forestfoundation.org](mailto:cwilson@forestfoundation.org) if you have any questions regarding registration.



## SUPPLIERS

### MINDA, Stiles Plans

MINDA and Stiles recently announced MINDA's acquisition of Deal Manufacturing in North Carolina and formation of MINDA North America.

The purchase and new presence in North America will better support Stiles' efforts to grow the mass timber industry and continue delivery of world-class customer service.

Stiles will continue to be the sales, service and support partner, while MINDA North America will continue to integrate and manufacture various technologies necessary for the mass timber industry. With the anticipated growth of the mass timber industry in North America over the next decade, both are ready to form a close partnership to better serve the market and their customers.

Charles Martin, who has been with Stiles for eight years will become President and CEO of MINDA North America to maintain the continuity of success that both companies have had for 10 years. MINDA North America will be based in Granite Falls, NC.

Both parties are proud to bring the North American market an even closer partnership in order to better serve the expected growth of the mass timber and building industry.

## HP Furniture Market Extends Dates, Plans

Organizers of the Fall 2020 High Point Market report that more than 70% of active exhibitor have confirmed their doors will be open for the event.

Fall Market is set to kick off on Tuesday, October 13. The extended, 9-day show will operate with a multitude of safety measures in place to align with the current health guidelines from the CDC and the State of North Carolina. It will culminate on Wednesday, October 21.

Attendees wanting to see which showrooms have confirmed open can visit the Exhibitor section of the High Point Market website, [www.highpointmarket.org/exhibitor](http://www.highpointmarket.org/exhibitor), and look for the golden "Confirmed Open" verbiage on an

exhibitor's profile.

The High Point Market Authority (HPMA) is taking new steps to keep all attendees of the Oct. 13-21 event as the industry works through the COVID-19 pandemic. These include:

- 1) fog and wipe down buses
- 2) make sure people are socially distanced on the buses
- 3) add a fleet of smaller vehicles — SUVs and sedans — to the 15-passenger Go Anywhere vans
- 4) use online pre-registration and mail all IMC exhibitor passes this year.

For more information or assistance at Market, please contact the AHMI office at (336) 885-8315 or [info@appalachianhardwood.org](mailto:info@appalachianhardwood.org).