

## Poplar, White Oak & RR Ties Get Attention

Attendees at the 2024 Annual Meeting of Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc. learned about key market and education programs.

The meeting was held Feb. 22-25 at The Hammock Beach Resort in Palm Coast, FL, and 135 members and guests participated. The agenda included business and educational presentations and networking opportunities.

The business sessions kicked off with an interesting presentation on InventWood. The Maryland company has designed a process to press Poplar and other lumber into a stiff building material. The company is a leader in cellulose-based material innovations.

InventWood Senior Process Engineer Charles Sturman said the advanced cellulose materials have better performance, lower costs, and are far more sustainable than alternatives used in construction and other applications around the world in 2024.

The company's flagship product is called MettleWood and begins with kiln-dried poplar lumber. It is processed through lignin modification and densification.

The process breaks the lignin bonds and allows the cellulose fibers to move closer together during densification. This forces the cellulose fibers of the wood to align far more closely with new hydrogen bonds formed and removing the

## Crowd Hears Updates At 2024 Annual Meeting in Florida

inherent porosity found in regular wood. Sturman said the material combines the best of metal – strength and durability – with wood, which is lightweight, low-cost, and sustainable.

He said the product meets industrial demands:

- o tensile strength is 50% stronger than steel.
- o 80% lighter than steel and less expensive.
- o net negative carbon footprint with the embodied carbon in the material.

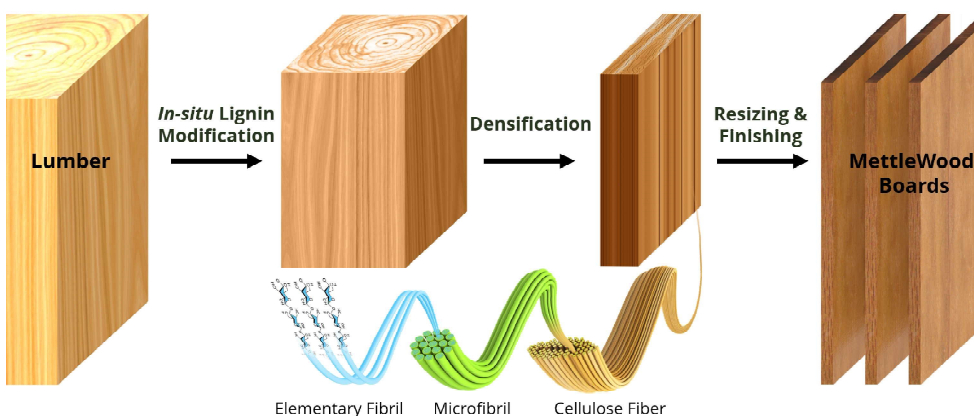
The startup company developed out of the University of Maryland's incubator program. Since the founding in 2016, InventWood has received close to \$25 million in federal awards including a \$20M Award from the Department of Energy.

**Railroad Tie Demand in 2024** – Bill Behan, vice president of Koppers and a past president of the Railway Tie Association, discussed tie demand in 2024. He said several factors are impacting tie production including the ability of mills to buy logs and produce ties; the performance of wood ties and their service life; and demand for ties.

He compared the pricing of railroad ties versus red oak lumber in three regions and tie values were stable. Behan said there are alternatives being considered like southern yellow pine to ad-

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### MettleWood Process and Outcomes



MettleWood process converts lumber into product that is:

- Fire-Resistant
- Dimensionally Stable
- Natural Wood Aesthetic
- Sustainable & Carbon Sequestering

## The way I see it...

By Tom Inman, AHMI President

...the hardwood industry lost an icon this week with the passing of Wendell Cramer, a true lumberman but more importantly a great person.

I do not recall the first time I met Wendell because I have seen him so many times in my 30 years with Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers. He was always a part of AHMI, Appalachian Lumbermen's Club, Hardwood Federation and National Hardwood Lumber Association events.



He was just Wendell. One of those "first name only people" that everyone knew who you were talking about. Frequently smiling and always offering a positive report on what was happening at W.M. Cramer Lumber Co. He was a glass half-full guy, well actually three-quarters full.

Wendell would spoil you right now with transportation on "Cramer Air," as he liked to call it. I traveled with him many times to Hardwood Federation Fly-Ins, the Indiana Hardwood Lumber Association or other meetings of the industry.

On one occasion, Wendell asked if I would go with him to Beckwith Lumber Co. in Slatyfork, WV, to speak at a company picnic. They asked Wendell to attend and needed a speaker so he asked me.

Wendell also asked if my 12-year-old son (at the time) would like to go. There was no greater thrill for my oldest than to sit in the cockpit of Cramer Air alongside Wendell!

I remember barbecue lunches in the fall at Cramer Lumber Co. where you would easily see 300+ people. It was THE event for that week and Wendell would drive up in his Model T and welcome all of the guests.

I have shared stories this week with others who have had great experiences with Wendell over the years. They all end with what a terrific man Wendell was.

His legacy lives on through his daughter, Kim, and son, Michael, and son-in-law Mark Vollinger.



## MEMBERSHIP

AHMI is pleased to announce new members:

### **Supplier**

#### **Lumber Payroll**

Nick Koen

600 N Broad St, Suite 5 #1113

Middletown, DE 19709

Tel: 315-750-9031

Email: [nick@lumberpayroll.com](mailto:nick@lumberpayroll.com)

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

### **BID Group**

Anne-Marie Levesque

18095 rue Lapointe

Mirabel Quebec J7J 1E3

Tel: 450-435-2121

Email: [anne-marie.levesque@bidgroup.ca](mailto:anne-marie.levesque@bidgroup.ca)

Website: [www.bidgroup.ca](http://www.bidgroup.ca)

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.

Membership information is available on the web at [www.appalachianhardwood.org/members](http://www.appalachianhardwood.org/members). The application can be submitted online and information is updated weekly.

For information, call the AHMI office (336) 885-8315 or email [info@appalachianhardwood.org](mailto:info@appalachianhardwood.org).

## 2024 Meeting Presentations Online

AHMI has placed electronic versions of the presentations from the 2024 Annual Meeting on our website. The PDFs are available for download at [www.appalachianhardwood.org/videos](http://www.appalachianhardwood.org/videos).

Please share this information with your employees and if you need more details, contact the AHMI office at email [info@appalachianhardwood.org](mailto:info@appalachianhardwood.org).

You can also find presentations and videos from past AHMI meetings.

## Meeting *from page 1*

-dress swings in hardwood markets.

**Real American Hardwood Campaign** – RAH Coalition Board Member Amy Snell of the Wood Components Manufacturers Association reported on the Magnolia Network campaign and results from social media work in 2023. Millions of consumers have been reached in the first phase.

RAH is committing to the second phase of the television and streaming service campaign and the cost is close to \$1 million for 2024. She explained that continuation will require additional funding from the industry.

Approximately 150 companies gave in 2023 and one-third are AHMI members.

There are also plans to target architects and designers with a new website. RAH will exhibit at



**Business sessions were well-attended**

consumer and industry events this year.

Attendees were asked to give at [www.realamericanhardwood.com/industry](http://www.realamericanhardwood.com/industry).

## AHMI Elects 2024-25 Officers, Board Members

AHMI Chairman Tom Sheets presented the State of the Association and the Nominating Committee slate of new Board members and officers at the 2024 Annual Meeting. The membership in attendance approved the following slate:

Chairman: Roy Zangari of Meadow River Lumber, Rainelle, WV

Vice Chairman Elect: Scott Cummings of Cummings Lumber, Troy, PA

Vice Chairman of Finance: Tony Honeycutt of Mullican Flooring, Johnson City, TN

Past Chairman: Tom Sheets of Blue Ridge Lumber, Fishersville, VA

Board members are:

Sebastian Church, Church & Church Lumber, Millers Creek, NC

David Pierson, Pierson Lumber, Clay, WV

Jamie Coleman, Robert S. Coleman Lumber Co., Culpeper, VA

Ray White, Jr., Harold White Lumber, Inc., Morehead, KY

Dean Alanko, Allegheny Wood Products, Inc., Petersburg, WV

John Pysh, Pennsylvania Hardwoods Co., Pleasantville, PA

Joe Pryor, Oaks Unlimited, Inc., Waynesville, NC

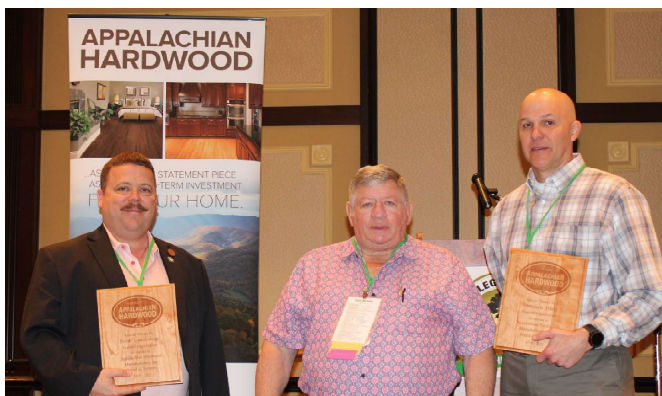
Andy Nuffer, RAM Forest Products, Inc., Shinglehouse, PA

Jeff Gowder, Southern Forest Products, Appalachia, VA

Darryl Eslinger, Conestoga Wood Specialties, East Earl, PA

Chris Osborne, Kentucky River Properties, Hazard, KY

Mark Vollinger, W.M. Cramer Lumber Co., Inc., Hickory, NC



**Chairman Tom Sheets (center) presented plaques to those completing Board terms. Scott Cummings (left), Cummings Lumber, and Stephen Harp, Pardee Resources, are pictured.** Others were Brian Conklin, Gutches Lumber; Tim Parton, Gilkey Lumber; Gat Caperton, Gat Creek; and Jay Reese, Penn-Sylvan, Intl

# AHMI Partners With Lumber Payroll Provider

Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc. has established a partnership with a payroll software and supplemental insurance provider.

Dough HCM LLC offers unique, proprietary technology to its customers through Lumber Payroll. It is specific to the hardwood industry payroll needs and offers access to wages earlier than pay day.

This benefit helps employees reduces financial strain and hardship AND differentiates employers, allowing them to offer an unique benefit that is expected to attract and retain talent.

The Dough HCM program offers world class technology infrastructure with 20 million lives currently onboarded. It is:

- Cloud based
- Dedicated U.S. based service reps
- Autonomous solutions from hire to retire
- Fully integrated solution – including but not limited to integrations with accounting, POS, timeclock, benefits, etc.

- Complimentary I-9 filing

AHMI members will be guaranteed a minimum 15% in cost reductions from their existing providers. Lumber Payroll provides savings in the form of a contractually obligated rebate. The rebate will be paid to the member companies on a quarterly basis.

As more AHMI members adopt, Lumber Payroll increases the rebate to members using the software. As an example, if the first company to adopt into the program receives 15% in annual savings, as soon as the 11<sup>th</sup> joins, the first will in-



crease to 20% savings, and at the 21<sup>st</sup> company joining, savings will increase to 25%.

Dough HCM offers a Section 125 plan that provides certain supplemental insurance benefits on a pre-tax basis. This money is taken out of the individual's gross pay and can be used for items such as group health insurance premiums, qualified out-of-pocket medical expenses, and daycare for eligible dependents.

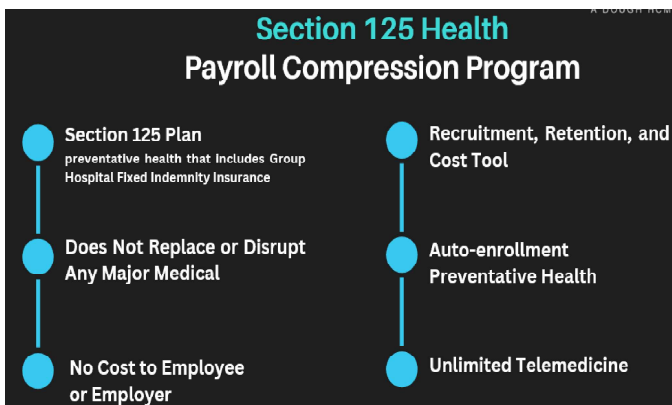
Under a Section 125 benefits plan, employers also see a reduction in the amount of income used to determine payroll taxes, resulting in reduced tax liabilities for Medicare, Social Security, and federal unemployment (FUTA). There may also be additional savings on withholding taxes in some states.

The company also offers DailyDough which integrates with the company time clock and payroll system to get real-time wage data for all employees. The application allows the employee to access a set percentage of their wages that they have earned. The DailyDough application automatically transmits the EWA deduction anytime that a team member accesses funds, to your payroll system.

For more information on Lumber Payroll and the Section 125 program, please contact:

Nick Koen at **Lumber Payroll** at Tel: 315-750-9031 or email: [nick@lumberpayroll.com](mailto:nick@lumberpayroll.com). The company website: [www.doughhcm.com](http://www.doughhcm.com)

You may also contact the AHMI office.



## WOI Sets Goals To Educate Landowners

WOI Executive Director Jason Meyer shared the group's mission to educate landowners on forest management for White Oak.

The research shows that without swift intervention today, the American white oak population will begin to **decline significantly within the next 10 to 15 years**, with more extreme declines over the next several decades.

Factors limiting regeneration are:

- Lack of active forest management, fire, and other disturbances
- Insects, disease, and invasive species
- Changing land use conditions

WOI has three goals:

1. Build internal capacity and infrastructure to ensure a well-run organization
2. Be the "Convener" that promotes and enhances white oak conservation efforts.
3. Be the "Connector and Collaborator" that fosters interactions between stakeholders working together to advance white oak conservation efforts.

Meyer encouraged attendees to get involved through:

- Financial support by joining the Acorns to Oaks Society
- Participation on WOI committee work
- Engagement with on the ground projects, research, demonstration sites
- Spread the word
- Policy issues – engage local, state and federal decision makers

For more information, contact [Jason@WhiteOakInitiative.org](mailto:Jason@WhiteOakInitiative.org) or visit [www.whiteoakinitiative.org](http://www.whiteoakinitiative.org)



## AHMI Event Calendar

Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc. plans to attend the following events to promote AHMI member companies and products.

Members are welcome to participate in the AHMI exhibit and we can assist with registration if required. Please check with the AHMI office:

- March 12: **ALC**, Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke, VA
- March 25-27: **HMA National Conference**, Charleston, SC
- April 2-4: **KFIA**, Lexington, KY
- April 11-13: **Expo Richmond**, Richmond, VA
- April 13-17: **High Point Furniture Market**, High Point, NC
- April 23-25: **Virginia Forestry Summit**, Charlottesville, VA
- May 2-5: **ALC Beach Meeting**, North Myrtle Beach, SC
- May 8-10: **Hardwood Summit**, Memphis, TN
- June 25-27: **Pellet Fuel Institute Annual Meeting**, Charleston, SC
- July 20-23: **AHMI Summer Conference**, Asheville, NC
- Aug. 6-9: **International Woodworking Fair**, Atlanta, GA
- Sept. 10: **ALC Meeting**, Asheville, NC
- Oct. 2-4: **NHLA Convention**, St. Louis, MO
- Oct. 26-30: **High Point Furniture Market**, High Point, NC
- Nov. 12-15: **GreenBuild**, Philadelphia, PA

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

If you know of events that AHMI should consider for participation, please contact the office. Members are welcome to work in the booth or meet customers.

AHMI also has materials member companies can use in exhibitions to explain the benefits of Appalachian Hardwoods and forest management. Please contact the office for details.

## HF Seeks Support During Busy Election Year

Hardwood Federation Executive Director Dana Cole shared key hardwood issues in the 2024 Presidential and Congressional campaigns at the AHMI Annual Meeting.

She said election years always require extra effort to educate legislators on bills that effect the hardwood industry. The HF focused is on:

- Forest Products Are Part of the Climate Solution
- Maintain Favorable Tax and Regulatory Systems
- Support Infrastructure & Transportation Policies
- Trade & Export Markets are Key to Industry Success.

HF staff is monitoring the following issues:

**Old Growth** – Additional limits on harvesting areas of the national forest system designated as old growth or mature. Management practices related to economic purposes are disallowed.

**Low Carbon Construction** – Unclear if available grants for low carbon building materials include wood products.

**Air Quality Rules** - Administration is proposing a tightening of fine particulate matter emissions that could impose millions of dollars of compliance costs on countless industries. AF&PA study



shows \$900M on the wood products sector.

**Endangered Species** – Opposing broader expansion of ESA authorities including blanket rule which provides threatened species a high level of protection from threats from the moment they are listed as threatened—basically making threatened and endangered close to the same.

Cole said there are key races this year including U.S. President; 435 U.S. House Members; 34 of 100 U.S. Senators; 11 Governors; and countless State and Local Government Seats.

She encouraged attendees to financially support the work of the Federation and the HFPAC. Contribution forms are available from the AHMI office or online at [hardwoodfederation.com](http://hardwoodfederation.com).

The Federation Fly-in is scheduled for May 21-23 in Washington, DC.

## Sporting Tournaments Provide Fun, Networking

The Annual Meeting Sporting Tournament winners were:

**Golf Friday:** Low Gross – 1<sup>st</sup> Brandon Turman, Turman Hardwoods; 2<sup>nd</sup> Jay Reese, Penn-Sylvan International; Low Net: 1<sup>st</sup> Alan Robbins, USNR; 2<sup>nd</sup> Steve Heintzleman, Keiver-Willard Lumber; Long drive Joe Pryor, Oaks Unlimited; Closest to the Pin Peter McCarty, TS Manufacturing.

**Saturday Golf Scramble:** 1<sup>st</sup> Jeff Gowder, Southern Forest Products, and Bruce Horner, Abenaki Timber; 2<sup>nd</sup> Alan Robbins, USNR, and Phil Cornett, WVGBC; Long drive Alan Robbins and Closest to the Pin Bruce Horner.

**Fishing:** Largest fish- Daniel Harris, Cooper Machine; Most fish: Jason Meyer, White Oak Initiative.

**Croquet winners Mary Catherine & Duke Baldrige of Dominion Risk Advisors**



**Croquet:** Duke and Mary Catherine Baldrige, Dominion Risk Advisors. More than 30 people participated in the annual croquet tournament.