

Fire Detection, Benefits Savings Top '25 AM

Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers has an informative and excellent networking Annual Meeting for 2025 planned for **Feb. 26-March 2** at Marriott Harbor Beach in Fort Lauderdale, FL.

The business sessions will offer details on key issues for the Appalachian Hardwood industry and there is ample time to meet with business associates, customers and suppliers. The agenda includes morning business sessions, afternoon sporting events, receptions each evening and a closing banquet dinner.

Marriott Harbor Beach is nestled along a quarter-mile stretch of pristine private beachfront blending Fort Lauderdale's laid-back tropical tranquility with signature Marriott service.

The business presentations are:

* **FNA Innovates Fire Suppression For Wood Manufacturers** - FNA representatives will explain new technology to detect and suppress sparks and fire in wood manufacturing processes.



* **Software Solutions For EUDR** - A panel discussion of software technology from DMSI, Forestry Systems, and Legna will address data collection to meet the needs of EUDR and more.

EUDR

* **Benefits, Insurance Programs Save Money** - AHMI partners will explain payroll, health and affinity insurance programs that increase benefits while saving money.

EUDR Software, New Congress & Economist Complete Program



* **UBS Economist Forecast 2025** - UBS Financial economist will share the company's forecast for the manufacturing economy in 2025.



* **Hardwood & The New Congress** - Hardwood Federation Executive Director Dana Cole will share key hardwood issues in 2025 with the new Congress and President.



* **Producer & Distributor Divisions Meetings** - Separate sessions for these AHMI groups to discuss issues of importance.

Please **REGISTER BY DEC. 31** for a drawing for \$100 Spa Gift Certificate **OR** \$100 AMEX gift card. Make room reservations at Marriott Harbor Beach by calling **(954) 525-4000** and ask for Appalachian Hardwood block. Room rates start at \$399 plus resort fee and block ends Jan. 26, 2025.

FUN planned daily!
See Agenda on page 2

The way I see it...

By Tom Inman, AHMI President

....another year is winding down and what a year 2024 has been in the Appalachian Hardwood industry.

We have seen one of the industry's largest production companies close and shutter eight facilities. Four of the sawmills and two kiln facilities have reopened under new companies while the others remain closed.

More than a dozen other sawmill and kiln operations have closed this year. Most of these were sold at auction and the buildings are repurposed.

Many Appalachian mills are running at reduced levels which means production may end the year at less than 5.5 billion board feet. This meets the forecasts from January.

The economy has been the largest factor as grade lumber markets have suffered from inflation, high interest rates and slow housing construction. This has kept demand low for our highest value product - grade lumber.

Substitute materials capture more market share during down times because the goods are cheaper. They are not as attractive, healthy for the consumer or provide lasting value but they are good enough.

Couple that with rising costs for insurance - both property and health rates are up double digits this year. Wages remain high in post-pandemic times. Fuel prices and freight were both up earlier in the year but have stabilized.

Production costs are higher than ever as evidenced in the 2024 AHMI Production Cost Survey completed mid-year. It found that sawmills of every size have seen fixed costs exceed the value of finished goods too many months.

What does this mean for 2025? There is hope that interest rates and overall costs will decline. The incoming Trump Administration has talked about positive actions for American companies but one of those is tariffs. Trump placed tariffs on China in 2018-2019 and many remain. China retaliated and it hurt hardwood lumber and log exports.

The crystal ball for 2025 is uncertain but there are positives. And the 18th century poet wrote, hope springs eternal!

2025 AHMI Annual Meeting Marriott Harbor Beach Resort Fort Lauderdale, FL

Agenda

Wednesday, Feb. 26

5:30 pm - Early Bird Reception

Thursday, Feb. 27

Morning activities on your own

2 pm - AHMI Board of Trustees Meeting

2-4 pm - Registration

5:30 pm - Welcome Reception by Stringer Ind.

Dinner on your own

Friday, Feb. 28

8:30 am - General Session

Business Presentations

12 pm - Golf Tournament

12 pm - Fishing Tournament

5:30 pm - Reception

Dinner on your own

Saturday, March 1

8 am - Producers Meeting – Producers only

8 am - Distributors Meeting – (open to all)

9:15 am - General Session

Business Presentations, Annual Meeting

1 pm - Golf Event

2-4 pm - Fun on the Beach

5:30 pm - Reception by Homag Stiles Inc.

6:30 pm - Banquet by PLM Insurance

Sunday, March 2

8:30 am - Fellowship of Christian Lumbermen

Travel home safely!

Registration form is on page 7 or visit www.appalachianhardwood.org/meetings. Call AHMI at (336) 885-8315.

REGISTER by DEC. 31

for a drawing of a

\$100 Spa Gift Certificate

OR

\$100 AMEX gift card

appalachianhardwood.org/meetings
to register & room reservations

Appalachian Hardwood Successes In 2024

PROMOTION

- Grew the Certified Appalachian Legal & Sustainable program that provides third-party audit of member companies.
- Maintained the Appalachian Hardwood Verified Sustainable and Verified Legal programs for member companies utilizing U.S. Forest Service data for the Appalachian Region that proves growth-to-removal is 2.4 to 1. Legality is proven by records from timber owners.
- Published 2024 Appalachian Hardwood Certified Legal and Sustainable Resource Guide with member information mailed to 8,000 domestic buyers. The Guide was distributed at events.
- Participated in High Point Furniture Markets in April and October.
- Sponsored the Designer / Maker Furniture Pinnacle Award for the International Society of Furniture Designers
- Participated in 20 state, regional and national association meetings and trade shows as a speaker, exhibitor and attendee.
- Distributed hundreds of promotional brochures and wood sample kits to wood consumers, individuals, schools and civic groups.
- Videos on YouTube channel explaining "Forests to Finished Goods" and "The Hardwood Resource: Grown in Seconds."
- Financial support of the American Hardwood Export Council, Hardwood Federation and Real American Hardwood Coalition.



PROMOTION - Export

- Distributed the 2024 Resource Guide to more than 12,000 lumber buyers in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and north Africa.
- Distributed trade leads to Export Division members.
- Member of the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) Board of Directors.
- Links to AHEC Market Reports from AHMI website.

EDUCATION

- Appalachian Hardwood Training Institute offers courses for industry workers to learn skills on three community college campuses. More than 400 employees and prospects trained in log and lumber grading, CDL, electric motor repair, and English.
- Scholarship to a West Virginia University student in the forestry program.
- Scholarship to Kendall School of Furniture Design student.



MEMBERSHIP

- Membership stable at 198 companies.
- Successful Annual Meeting and Summer Conference with key business presentations and networking opportunities.
- Expanded Appalachian Hardwood 401k Multiple Employer Plan for retirement accounts for member companies and employees.
- Began Lumber Payroll program with DoughHCM

Election '24 Brings New People, Issues To DC

By Dana Lee Cole, Executive Director

In one of our last team meetings before election day, Hardwood Federation staff discussed the fact that it is not uncommon in these close contests that the results break hard in one candidate's direction. That was true on election night 2024.

It was pretty clear early in the evening that the Trump/Vance ticket was going to hold swing states that were on the margin (Georgia and North Carolina) and prevail in key battlegrounds like Pennsylvania. In the end, President-elect Trump captured all seven battleground states, secured 312 Electoral votes—needing only 270—and won the popular vote. He will be sworn in January 20.

As expected, the GOP regained control of the U.S. Senate with 53 seats in the 100-seat chamber, picking up seats in West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Montana. Democrats won several tight races and will have 47 seats in the Minority. For the first time in 17 years, Senate Republicans selected a new leader, as Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) stepped aside. McConnell deputy John Thune (R-SD) will take over as Majority Leader in January; Democratic Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) will retain his role as minority leader in 2025.

The House caucuses will continue with current Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-LA) and current Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) continuing to lead their parties.

As the Hardwood Federation looks to next year with a new Congress and a new Administration, we intend to remain laser focused on our key federal public policy priorities. These include:

§ **The Farm Bill:** Assuming reauthorization is not realized in the 2024 Lame Duck Session, producing a Farm Bill will be job one. The HF Team will advocate for a bill that doubles, or at least maintains, funding for export promotion programs that our sector relies on to open up and sustain overseas markets for U.S. hardwood products. Other areas include grant programs to promote wood markets, forest management reform provisions and language directing the Executive Branch to accept forest-based biomass energy as “carbon neutral” in their policymaking.



§ **Tax:** Restoring key business tax benefits that have been allowed to lapse or begin phasing out, including 100 percent bonus depreciation and the research and development tax credit, as well as extending the 20 percent tax deductions for pass throughs that expires at the end of 2025.

§ **Biomass:** In addition to our Farm Bill advocacy on biomass, reauthorizing our biomass carbon neutrality appropriations rider and educating incoming EPA officials about the carbon neutral nature of forest biomass energy.

One area of concern with the incoming Administration is its campaign rhetoric around tariffs. While some industry sectors benefited from tariffs on competing materials, including flooring, the retaliatory tariffs imposed by China on lumber and log exports during the first Trump Administration were devastating. The Federation intends to ramp-up our education efforts in the coming weeks to ensure that policymakers understand that over-reliance on tariffs will have profound unintended consequences and should be used with tactical precision, not only for our sector but any grower or employer that relies on export markets.

There will be many new faces in the House and Senate in the 119th Congress. The Federation team is preparing materials now that will be useful in our introductory meetings with these officials after they are sworn into office in January. We will also move to schedule our annual Fly-In to DC as soon as possible. We hope many of our industry leaders will join us in our efforts to advocate for pro-hardwood policies.

Each new Administration and Congress presents its own set of challenges and opportunities. While some are clear today, others will emerge as the new players take their seats at the table.

AHMI Partners Provide Service, Savings

401k Multiple Employer Plan

In a partnership with UBS Financial, the AHMI plan allows hardwood companies to pool existing retirement accounts or start new programs for employees. The plan offers economies of scale pricing that lowers costs for recordkeeping, third party administrators and financial consultants.

Participants have access to low-cost investments that are typically only available to very large corporate plans. There is also no individual company audit requirement saving staff time and creating efficiencies.

Adopting employers have plan design flexibility and can retain their individual plan features such as a matching formula, vesting and eligibility. UBS is the world's largest wealth managers and the AHMI team, Southeast Wealth Consultants, is the plan provider designated by UBS.

For more information, please contact the AHMI office at (336) 885-8315.

Lumber Payroll

AHMI 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 electronic access to wages.

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

AHMI members will be guaranteed a minimum 15% in cost reductions from their existing providers. As more AHMI members adopt, Lumber Payroll increases the rebate to members using the software. Initial adopters are saving thousands of dollars in expenses.

For more information, contact Nick Koen at **Lumber Payroll** at Tel: 315-750-9031 or email: nick@lumberpayroll.com.

AHMI 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:

2025

Jan. 14: **ALC**, Concord, NC

Jan. 23: **SAF Kentucky | Tennessee Annual Meeting**, Knoxville, TN

Feb. 5-7: **Ohio Forestry Association**, Columbus, OH

Feb. 26-March 2: **AHMI Annual Meeting**, Fort Lauderdale, FL

March 11: **ALC**, Roanoke, VA

March 17-19: **IHLA**, Indianapolis, IN

April 1-3: **KFIA**, Lexington, KY

April 15-17: **NWFA Expo**, Charlotte, NC

April 26-30: **High Point Furniture Market**, High Point, NC

May 1-4: **ALC Beach Meeting**, North Myrtle Beach, SC

May 7-9: **VA Forestry Summit**, Roanoke, VA

July 19-22: **AHMI Summer Conference**, Hot Springs, VA

For more information, please call the AHMI office at (336) 885-8315 or 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.

Appalachian For Your Exhibits

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.

AHMI also has materials for member companies to use in your trade exhibits. There are Wood Fact Books, Guidelines for Grading & Scaling Logs, Characteristics of Appalachian Hardwoods and hardwood sample kits available.

**REAL
AMERICAN
HARDWOOD**

NATURALLY AUTHENTIC™

Real American Hardwood Coalition *Day of Giving*

At this time of year, we give thanks for many things. From family and friends to industry colleagues and fulfilling careers, there's a lot to be thankful for in our everyday lives.

On Giving Tuesday, Adam Conway from Superior Hardwoods of Ohio, Inc., had a message to share. Click the image below to watch or visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0lrXqBt-Umo>

Build Your World® and give back to support the industry that has given so much to all of us. If you'd like to make a voluntary, year-end contribution to the RAHC, click a button below.

And remember, contributions made out directly to the RAHC are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Thank you for your consideration and support



Donate Online

Donate by Mail

Follow us, like, comment, repost on social media!



The Real American Hardwood Coalition inspires a stylish and healthy environment by educating consumers on the many benefits of Real American Hardwood products including appearance, durability, lifetime value, healthy home, and sustainability.

2025 Annual Meeting on Feb. 26-March 2 Harbor Beach Marriott., Fort Lauderdale, FL

REGISTRATION



All participants must register to accurately plan for receptions, Saturday Closing Banquet and function space. Please complete this form and return with your payment to: AHMI, PO Box 427, High Point, NC 27261. Badges and other materials will be on site. **To reserve your room, call (954) 525-4000** ask for Appalachian Hardwood block.

The room cutoff is Jan. 26, 2025 and rooms start at \$399 plus resort fee.

You can also register online at www.appalachianhardwood.org/meetings

Registration before Feb. 15, 2025:

AHMI MEMBER - \$600 per person GUEST - \$675 per person
 SPOUSE & ADULT CHILD - \$475 GUEST SPOUSE - \$575
 CHILDREN AGE 10-18 - \$300, UNDER 10 - \$200

Add \$75 to any registration fee after Feb. 15, 2025

Registration includes three receptions, closing banquet dinner, business sessions and breaks, afternoon at the beach, and fun!

Full registration fee refunded on cancellations received by Feb. 1, 2025. Cancellations received after that will be subject to 50% forfeiture.

REGISTER for AHMI'S 2025 ANNUAL MEETING

Name: _____ FEE: \$ _____
 Name: _____ FEE: \$ _____
 Company: _____
 Address: _____
 City/State/Zip: _____



Optional Events I / We will attend
(included in registration fee)

Saturday Closing Banquet at 7 pm *(included in registraton fee)*
 ___ people will attend

Golf Tournament Friday at 12 noon at *Emerald Hills Club*
(includes lunch, range balls. Rental clubs are available)

Name: _____ FEE: \$200

Name: _____ FEE: \$200

Fishing Tournament Friday at 12 noon sportfishing
(4-hour fishing trip, includes boxed lunch, tackle, bait, license)
 \$200 for each of four slots on multiple chartered boats

Name: _____ FEE: \$200

Name: _____ FEE: \$200

TopGolf Saturday at 1pm *(includes shuttle and lunch)*

Name(s): _____ FEE: \$135 each



Check # _____ Received _____

Credit Card # _____ Exp. _____ Sec. Code _____ Billing Zip _____

TOTAL \$ _____