



Appalachian Hardwood News

January 2025



Annual Meeting Offers Key Business Topics

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 Software, New Congress, Fire Suppression & Economist



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

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

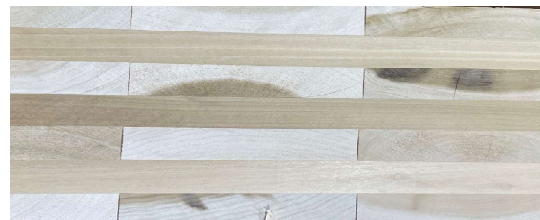
(See Meeting on page 2)

Poplar CLT Proposal Passes Committee Review

The committee developing the standards for including Yellow Poplar in International Building Codes (IBC) as an approved material for cross-laminated timber products has approved its final ballot and the request has moved forward.

The process began in 2021 to research, test and develop standards for IBC. The PRG-320 Committee was tasked by APA to develop and write the standards.

After more than two years of analysis, all questions have been answered and the language has been forwarded to APA for acceptance. The request will be submitted to ANSI for adoption this month.



APA officials report the final standard will be published in 2025. Adoption in building codes allows architects and designers to specify the materials in construction.

AHMI and its members have assisted three universities and two private companies in research and testing and look forwards to adoption.



AHMI is pleased to announce a new member:

Supplier

Wellons Canada
Steve Dalby
19087 96th AVE
SURREY, BC V4N 3P2 CANADA
Tel: 604-881-3207
Email: steve.dalby@wellons.ca
Website: www.wellons.ca

Welcome to this company!

New members are vital to the work of AHMI and 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, and meeting opportunities.

AHMI Dues For 2025

Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc. mailed its 2025 Membership Dues recently and are payable by Jan. 31. The dues are annual for Distributor, Consumer, Forestry and Supplier Divisions. Producer members pay monthly. (Export membership is for Producers and Distributors in addition to primary dues.)

Rates remain the same for 2025.

Annual Meeting Sponsorship

The 2025 Annual Meeting of Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc. is an excellent place to meet existing and new customers. There are Meeting Sponsorships available to enhance the session and encourage companies.

Sponsors receive:

- 1) Recognition during the Annual Meeting;
- 2) Signage for each sponsored event;
- 3) Recognition in the meeting program;
- 4) Table for literature in the Meeting Room.

Please contact the AHMI office today about the remaining sponsorship opportunities.

Meeting from page 1

* **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.

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!

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 - Top 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 8 or visit www.appalachianhardwood.org/meetings. Call AHMI at (336) 885-8315.



ERC Deadline Is Jan. 21 For Eligible 2021 Funds

RUTHERFORDTON, NC – Last Call for ERC!

With the nomination of Billy Long as the IRS commissioner the new Trump Administration made a strong statement about their support for small business and an even stronger statement of their support of the Employee Retention Credit program.

“Virtually everyone qualifies,” Long said.

You must act now! The deadline to register for your risk-free evaluation is January 15th, 2025.

Despite the natural sunset of the 2020 Employee Retention Credit (ERC), businesses still have the opportunity to claim funds for 2021, with up to \$21,000 per employee on the available.

DeltaERC partners with Jorns & Associates, a leading authority in ERC assistance offering expert guidance to unlock billions in returns for thousands of clients.

Recent data reveals a startling fact: less than 50% of eligible companies have filed for the program. This means that countless businesses are missing out on vital financial support that could significantly bolster their operations.

It is important to note that less than 1% of ERC cases involve fraud, and those rare instances mirror similar occurrences with the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), often involving made-up companies.

With Jorns’ proven track record and adherence to strict compliance standards, businesses can trust in a seamless and legitimate process to claim their rightful ERC funds.

For more information or to begin the process, contact AHMI member Grant Deviney at DeltaERC, grant@deltaerc.com or phone (828) 382-7755.

PLM Insurance Makes Leadership Changes

Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual Insurance Company (PLM) announces several leadership changes and promotions within the company’s executive staff.

The changes are part of PLM’s strategy to enhance the organization’s profitability and growth and prepare for the future, while recognizing the changing complexity of the business of insurance.

Steve Firko, CPCU, will assume the role of executive vice president (EVP) and chief operating officer (COO) overseeing all front-line customer-focused operating departments. These include underwriting, field operations, claims, loss control, marketing, customer service, and operations as PLM continues to evolve to meet the market demands of the future.

“Steve is a deliberate and thoughtful leader who not only knows insurance but understands the unique risks and features of the wood niche,” said PLM President and Chief Executive Officer John Smith, CPCU.

Firko most recently served as senior vice president (SVP) of business development, loss control and customer service at PLM. His notable career spans nearly 40 years in the industry.

Other executive promotions include:

- Rich Hall will assume responsibility for regulatory and government affairs, as well as for special projects.
- Steve Hicks, appointed as Vice President (VP) of underwriting.
- Lindsey DiGangi, CPCU, has been appointed as VP of field operations.
- Sean Briscoe, has been appointed as VP of loss control.
- Erin Selfe, CPCU, has been appointed as SVP of information technology.
- Harold Jamison, JD, CPCU, has been appointed as general counsel.

For more information about PLM, please visit <https://www.plmins.com/>.

New Congress Readies For Busy Year

By Dana Lee Cole, Executive Director

As expected, the Congressional calendars for the 119th Congress came out the first week of December and based on the number of days that Congress has penciled in to be in Washington, 2025 is looking to be a very busy year. The incoming leadership has identified a number of consequential, challenging policy issues to address and maximizing time in Washington will be essential to make meaningful progress on any of them.

Tax

Tax lobbyists are dubbing 2025 as the “Super Bowl of Tax” and “Taxmageddon.” While we anticipated that tackling expired and expiring business tax benefits would be the first item this year as part of a budget reconciliation package, it appears that President-elect Trump and Republican leadership are going to first pursue other issues on which he campaigned.

According to leadership staff, the GOP will pursue two distinct reconciliation packages next year. The first will focus on energy, border security and military readiness/defense. Specifics on policies that will fall into these tranches are not yet clear. The second package will focus singularly on tax and extending the business tax benefits enacted by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA).

The Hardwood Federation’s priorities in the second reconciliation bill will be restoring the full expensing tax benefit that has been phasing out over the last few years and is scheduled to take another 20 percent haircut in January. The plan is to restore 100 percent bonus depreciation back to 100 percent and do so retroactively.

The other piece is reviving and extending the research and development (R&D) tax credit. As part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), the ability of businesses to fully expense R&D costs in the same year those costs were incurred expired in 2022. Currently, those R&D costs have to be amortized over a 5-year period—essentially making investments in your business more expensive.

Again, the plan is to restore and extend full expensing of R&D costs and make restoration of this key tax benefit retroactive.



Also riding on this second train will be extending the 20 percent tax deduction for S-Corporations and other pass-through tax structures. This benefit was also put in place by the TCJA in an effort to introduce some semblance of tax parity between the rate larger C corporations negotiated and that which is assessed to smaller Main Street businesses. Unfortunately, this benefit expires at the end of 2025 and its extension is critical.

Farm Bill

It is a virtual certainty that last year around this time we wrote that the Farm Bill would be a top priority in the coming year and that action on re-authorizing legislation was imminent. Regrettably, we are in the unfortunate position of having to write that same sentence again one year later.

The politics simply did not align between Democrats and Republicans this year on a Farm Bill rewrite. Party leadership remained so far apart on spending that consensus was unachievable.

Legislators also showed their support for grant programs at the Department of Agriculture that incentivize innovative wood product manufacturing and renewable heat and power projects that provide offtake for our sawmill residuals.

Trade

The President-elect’s campaign rhetoric over the last year or so has been pretty consistent on the international trade front. He has vowed that from Day One of his second Presidency he plans to get tough with our trading partners and rely heavily on his favorite tool to level the international playing field—tariffs.

We will keep you regularly apprised of developments in this space and will be calling on you to help in our advocacy efforts should the tariff threat become a reality.

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. 23-24: **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

Sept. 9: **ALC**, TBD

Oct. 1-3: **NHLA Convention**, San Antonio, TX

Oct. 24-29: **High Point Furniture Market**, High Point, NC

Nov. 11: **ALC**, TBD

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.

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™

172 Million Impressions On TV, Social & Digital Media

By Ian Faight

Digital Community Manager, RAHC

Over the past two years, the Real American Hardwood Coalition (RAHC) united the collective efforts of the hardwood industry, engaged with creative minds and entertainment partners, and launched its Build Your World® advertising campaign—the industry’s first-ever, collaborative national advertising campaign targeting consumers. And the numbers are in.

During two, six-month runs spanning the second halves of 2023 and 2024, the Build Your World campaign produced:

- **116.4 million impressions on the Magnolia Network**
- **33.1 million impressions on Instagram + Facebook**
- **7.4 million impressions on YouTube**
- **14.3 million impressions on the Google Display Network**
- **627,000 impressions via Google Search**

For those counting, that’s approaching 172 million combined impressions across the various TV, social, and digital platforms. While the results of the campaign are impressive and outperformed expectations, there’s more work to be done.

Entering year three of the Build Your World campaign, the RAHC’s messaging will shift from the previous awareness and engagement stages to the consideration stage—ultimately influencing decisions when it’s time for consumers to purchase flooring, cabinetry, furniture, and millwork to bring into their homes. And as you may



have guessed, this is the most critical stage of the campaign and the RAHC is working to ensure Real American Hardwood is the natural choice.

As the industry continues to navigate an uncertain economy and seeks to reclaim market share from alternative, wood-look products, the need for increased and consistent promotion and education has never been more apparent.

No other product shares Real American Hardwood’s natural beauty, dependable performance, lasting value, healthy home attributes, or environmental story. Now is the time to support the RAHC and Build Your World for a sustainable future—for your company and the industry as a whole.

To learn more about the RAHC and its work to promote Real American Hardwood products and educate consumers and design professionals, visit realamericanhardwood.com/industry.



AHTI
APPALACHIAN
HARDWOOD
TRAINING INITIATIVE

COMING SOON

The Appalachian Hardwood Training Initiative would like to invite you to our upcoming trainings!

NHLA Lumber Grading Training

Location: Glenville, WV (GSU Department of Land Resources, 921 Mineral Road)

Price: \$110

Date: February 12th- 14th, 2025

Please RSVP by January 31st, 2025

NHLA Log Grading Short Course

Location: Glenville, WV (GSU Department of Land Resources, 921 Mineral Road)

Price: \$74

Date: March 6th-7th, 2025

Please RSVP by February 21st, 2025

Saw Filers Training

Location: COMING SOON

Price: TBD

Date: April 3rd-4th, 2025

Please contact Gabrielle Hedges with any interest!

More info coming soon!!

POTENTIAL NHLA 2-WEEK LUMBER GRADING TRAINING

Location: Elkins, WV (Subject to change)

Price: \$3,100

Date: TBD April, 2025

Please contact Gabrielle Hedges with any interest

Dates will be finalized with enough interest



RSVP or request more info by email to Gabrielle Hedges, AHTI Workforce Coach at gabrielle.hedges@glenville.edu

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 _____ **TOTAL \$ _____**
 Credit Card # _____ Exp. _____ Sec. Code _____ Billing Zip _____