

FITZPATRICK -
Continued from page 20

price and promise a lot of things, but they may not be able to make the product. Usually after a customer goes through that experience, they're our customer for a long time."

The company ships its product throughout North America and abroad. They ship quantities from as few as a single piece up to multiple truckloads and containers. Fitzpatrick & Weller has shipped to over 35 different countries worldwide.

In addition to its affiliation with the National Hardwood Lumber Assoc. (NHLA), Fitzpatrick & Weller is a member of the Wood Components Manufacturer's Assoc., Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers Inc., Penn-York Lumbermen's Club, American Forestry & Paper Assoc., American Hardwood Export Council and The Empire State Forest Products Assoc. They are also third-party certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and participating members of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI).

Fitzpatrick & Weller has also extended into the service industry through forestry consulting. They are now offering forestry consultation to landowners in western New York and northern Pennsylvania. Services offered include timber sale administration, forest management planning, forest inventory and property line maintenance. Jeremy Stitt, director of forest operations, handles this side of the business, which also includes managing the timberlands owned by Fitzpatrick & Weller. He has been with the company for nearly five years.

The firm has approximately 90 employees. Other key employees include: Dana Fitzpatrick, chairman of the board; Dan Fitzpatrick, vice president of engineering; J.C. Fritz,

lumber sales; Dave Hellwig, dimension superintendent; Tom Tressler, lumber superintendent; and Steve Krez, quality control manager and safety.

In the early 1950s, Dana Fitzpatrick, Greg's father, began working for the firm after school. One of his early jobs included loading railroad boxcars with Hard Maple blocks. As Dana's role grew, he became an important part of the company progression, and it was ultimately Dana's decision in 1965 to purchase Murphy Co., a direct competitor, that helped change the direction of Fitzpatrick & Weller.

"When we merged the two companies together, that's when we really got into the dimension business," he said. "We took over their kilns, purchased most of their timberlands, and diversified into lumber and components. Our combination with Murphy gave us the ability to bring value-added products to the market both domestically and internationally."

Dana said Fitzpatrick & Weller has remained successful due to its diverse inventory and client base that has included furniture, kitchen cabinet, musical instrument and specialty companies.

"In today's difficult times, nobody is insulated from what we're going through," he said. "Fitzpatrick & Weller is a unique company because we do so many different things. We own dry kilns, a concentration yard, and we still own and manage timberland. We also run a dimension/component plant and market northern hardwood lumber, which we have done since the 1950s."

Dana said the northern hardwoods his company specializes in have attracted many high-end customers both domestically and internationally.

"Northern hardwoods are very consistent in color and uniformity," he said. "That's an advantage we can provide. When you desire the same

high-quality product load after load, container after container, look to Fitzpatrick & Weller."

For more information, contact Fitzpatrick & Weller, Inc. at 716-699-2393, visit www.fitzweller.com or email to sales@fitzweller.com.

APPALACHIAN CLUB -
Continued from page 14

Lumbermen's Club and included many of its members. The program



Tom Hayes, Roanoke Forest Products Co., Roanoke, Va.; Brian Ballard, Huntersville Hardwoods Inc., Huntersville, N.C.; and Mark Pierce, Cranberry Hardwoods Inc., Jamestown, N.C.

William McNeill and Danny Arnold, Little River Lumber Co. LLC, Taylorsville, N.C.; and Larry Cockram, Griffith Lumber Co. Inc., Woolwine, Va.



Joel Stopha, Virginia Department of Agriculture, Richmond, Va.; Bruce Griffith, Griffith Lumber Co. Inc., Woolwine, Va.; and David Evans, Home Lumber Co. Inc., Eden, N.C.

was conducted by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Small Business Administration, Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc., and SunTrust Bank.

Participants received market reports from Asia and Europe from buyers from those countries. AHMI President Tom Inman reported on a recent American Hardwood Export Council trip to Spain and AHEC Chairman Orn Gudmundsson, Jr., shared information about the group.

North Carolina Furniture Export Director Tom Crump discussed the upcoming schedule of trade shows sponsored by the organization. These include trips to China, Dubai and Europe and Crump detailed the services available from the Department of Commerce:

- Help identifying overseas agents, distributors and clients;
- Assistance with market entry strategies;
- Assistance with competitive evaluations;
- Industry focused trade shows in key markets; and
- Emphasis on small and medium-sized companies

The seminar included freight forwarding information from two compa-

Continued on page 24

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APPALACHIAN CLUB -

Continued from page 21

nies. The representatives said freight forwarders can:

- Assist with freight quotes and costs of international shipping
- Provide an itemized list of costs
- Arrange for booking space for freight on vessels
- Provide a shipper with the foreign destination's documentary requirements

- Prepare shipping documents, banking and other collection papers necessary in the transaction
- Process shipping documents and handle certification and legalization

Three international banking companies presented information about the services available from their institutions. Officials said exporters should work to maintain control of the lumber through the process.

Exporters should: choose the issuing bank; confirm the letter of credit; keep all documents simple and include the commercial invoice, bill of lading, packing list, insurance, and certificates in the letter of credit; and make certain all documents are accurate and consistent.

George Thomas, U.S. Department of Commerce director in Charlotte, said the crowd of more than 60 participants received valuable information.

The club meeting attracted almost 100 attendees. Members socialized prior to dinner and received club reports from President David Kay of Forest Products Inc., Conover, N.C. The after dinner program was illusionist Sammy Cortino of Hickory, N.C.

Officers for 2008-2009 for the Appalachian Lumbermen's Club are President David Kay, Forest Products, Inc., Conover, N.C.; Vice President Jamie Straka, Vernon James Co., Hickory, N.C.; Secretary/Treasurer

Kim Vollinger, W.M. Cramer Lumber Co., Hickory, N.C.; and Past President Steve Cash, Jim Cash Lumber, Hickory, N.C.

The board of directors are Skipper Beal, Sylvia Church, Bud Griffith, Cliff McKittrick, Greg Pappas and Rusty Logue.

HMA -

Continued from page 1

environmental concerns about wood; tropical deforestation; and illegal logging.

Snow showed a chart that illustrated the increase in U.S. hardwoods exports as a percentage of U.S. production. That percentage has increased from slightly more than 8 percent in 1999 to slightly more than 13 percent in 2007.

There are several "drivers of environmental policies" that are in place now, or new ones being discussed, noted Snow. Concern over illegal logging is among them. He said that illegal material depresses world prices for wood by up to 16 percent and severely undermines markets for legal operators, thus undermining the reputation of the wood industry.

The top driving force, though, are the international political processes, said Snow. These include the EU Forest Law Enforcement and Trade Action Plan; the voluntary bilateral agreements with producing countries, mainly in the tropics; and the legality licensing procedures for log, lumber, plywood and veneer imports.

The second driving force behind environmental policies, he said, are the environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS). Snow noted that Greenpeace is targeting use of

wood from 'illegal sources' in high profile public sector construction projects. Also, various organizations are working in tandem with green party and

other political allies in European and National Parliaments to agitate for more rapid change.

Another driving force is the EU domestic supply, said Snow, who reported that 60 percent of EU commercial forest areas are certified to either FSC or PEFC. Also, 9,000 chain-of-

custody certificates have been issued in Europe and rising at a rate of more than 1,000 yearly over the last three years. He noted that European hardwoods now are readily available as FSC or PEFC certified with no need to pay a premium. He continued that an incentive to shift over to 100 percent certified materials is the high cost of mixing certified and uncertified stock.

Snow classified LEED as 'bad for wood' and BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method) as 'good for wood.' He stated that LEED gives more credit to recyclability than renewability, and only gives credit for 'rapid renewable.' Also, he noted that LEED does not recognize all credible forest certification systems. By comparison, BREEAM's "heavy emphasis on energy efficiency of buildings plays to wood's strengths as a superior insulator" and favors "use of materials that have less impact on the environment taking into account for the full life cycle." With BREEAM, timber certification is not mandatory, but bonus credits are offered where it is available. Also, credits are offered for all credible forest certification systems (FSC, PEFC,

CSA, SFI) based on objective assessment of merits of each system undertaken by United Kingdom government.

Some other topics discussed at the HMA meeting included: the hazards of combustible dust; domestic and international transport issues; the emerging biomass industry; and adapting to the challenges of certification.

Attendees were also afforded the opportunity to

view new products on display by vendors who participated in the Expo. The HMA board of directors also met during the conference.

The HMA is a national trade organization with membership limited to hardwood sawmills and lumber concentration yards in the United States. For more information about the HMA, which is located in Pittsburgh, Pa., phone 412-829-0770, or visit the association's website at www.hma.org.

CLA HOCKEY -

Continued from page 15

Cardinal Distribution, 7-5.

The CLA membership is divided into four bureaus primarily servicing the hardwood and softwood lumber manufacturing community. The CLA has members in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes as well as in 18 states of

Continued on page 25

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CLA HOCKEY -
Continued from page 24

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**BUSINESS TRENDS
(ABROAD)**

UNITED KINGDOM

Softwood imports for the UK dropped by 31 percent to 5.51 million m3 compared to 7.946 million m3 in previous months. The forecast for the rest of 2009 is for even lower import volumes. The fact that housing levels in the UK dropped by 43 percent in 2008 reflects the forecast for more reduction in the number of houses being built in 2009. A positive note for the building and construction industry in the UK is the upcoming 2012 London Olympics. There will be an increasing demand for timber and timber products as building starts for the accommodation structures.

FRANCE

New housing levels in France fell 18 percent by the end of 2008. The Ministry responsible for housing indicated that this trend will continue throughout 2009. The timber industry, which is already seeing a downturn in demand will be affected with the lack of demand for sawn timber.



Storms that moved through southwest France during recent months affected the Maritime Pine forest along the coast of this part of France. By just how much the sawmilling industry in this region will be affected, has not yet been determined. However, the first indications are that it could be significant. Consequently the demand for Pine could increase.

A reduction in sawn timber production by 7.5 percent was reported for the Swedish timber industry. A similar situation exists for Finland, where sawn timber production was down by 20 percent. In both cases a direct reflection of the downturn in demand for sawn timber across the world not just Europe.

While the Swedish sawn timber producers are exporting less to Europe, Japan and the U.S., they are increasing exports to a number of African countries such as Egypt and Libya fairly successfully. This remains in competition to American softwoods where increased exports have been recorded.

CANADA

According to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) recent Housing Market Outlook, housing starts reached 211,056 units, a decrease from 228,343. Starts are forecasted to be about 160,250 by the end of 2009 and 163,350 in 2010. Chief economist for CMHC, Bob Dugan said, "The new home market is moderating due to a number of key factors. The economic downturn will result in a decrease in demand for home ownership leading to a decline in housing starts and existing home sales for 2009. Housing market activity will begin

to strengthen as the Canadian economy rebounds in 2010 and the level of housing starts over the forecast period will be more in line with demographic fundamentals." A recent report by the Multiple Listing Service (MLS®), stated that existing home sales are expected to decline 14.6 percent during 2009 to 370,500 units. The level of MLS® sales is expected to increase by 9.3 percent to 405,000 units in 2010. Prices are forecast to be at an average of \$287,900 for 2009, a decline of 5.2 percent and 2010 is expected to see little change from those averages.

For the construction sector, seasonally adjusted production recently fell by 2.2 percent in the euro area (EA15) and by 1.7 percent in the EU27 compared to previous months. Estimated by Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, average output decreased by 2.7 percent in the euro area and by 1.2 percent in the EU27.

Of increases, the most significant were registered in Poland (+2.0%); the Netherlands and Romania (both +1.5%). Among decreases the largest were recorded in Slovenia (-9.6%), Spain (-6.9%) and Bulgaria (-3.3%).

Building construction fell by 1.8 percent in the euro area and by 2.1 percent in the EU27, after 1.3 percent in both zones in previous months.

NEWFOUNDLAND

In other news, a central Newfoundland mill, Abitibi Bowater recently closed its doors to its mill here. Since the recession began, the forest products industry has taken many hits and many mills have closed. According to the Forest Products Association, 38,000 jobs and 207 mills have closed since 2003.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Revenues for the B. C. forestry revenues dropped from more than \$1 billion to \$652 million, making 2009 the worst year on record. Avrim Lazar, CEO of Canada's Forest Products Association, sees light at the end of the tunnel. "Americans will continue to live in houses," he said. "There will be pent-up demand when the credit crisis is over. And they will continue to build houses using wood."

WEST AFRICA

For the past two or three months West African exporters managed to stay at a reasonably steady pace with largely unchanged prices for export logs. Elsewhere, prices crumbled and the volume of trade fell away in many of the traditional markets.

Sales to Europe weakened in late 2008 and Italy showed the trend as the furniture industry became affected by the growth in China's furniture exports to the U.S. and world markets.

VIETNAM

Vietnam became more actively involved in exports of furniture and other wood products, which opened up a relatively small but important alternative market for West African timber exports buying Bilinga, Tala Azobe, Padouk and Belli; but trade volumes are being held back by a shortage of containers.

CHINA

An active volume buyer, China continued to trade, which to an extent is supported and fostered by the ownership and partnerships in West African timber producing

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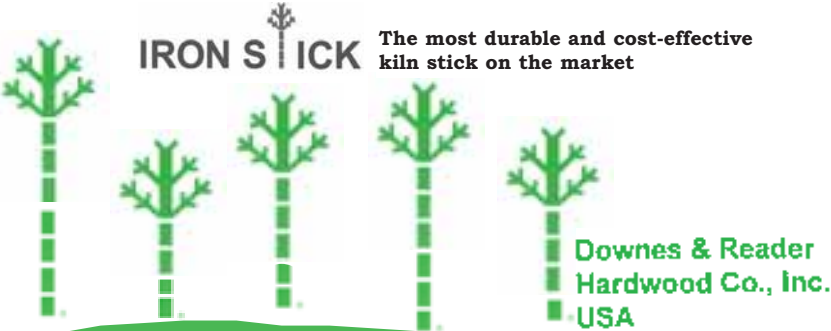
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BUSINESS TRENDS
(ABROAD)

Continued from page 25

companies. India is also an ongoing buyer of West African product,



mainly heavy hardwoods. In other news, the Gabon Forestry Department announced a ban on the harvest of four species—Ozigo, Moabi, Douka and Afo. At press time the effects are not yet apparent in Gabon as the Forestry Department has been on strike due to disputes over pay and conditions. As a direct result, concession holders do not know if they will be allowed extended harvest areas, extra harvest volumes per hectare, forest tax relief or compensation. There is some demand for the existing stocks of the four species, where producers increased prices by up to €30/m3 for scantlings of Douka logs and log exporters are asking €10-15/m3 more for whatever stock is still available. Most other price changes for the region were downwards, on an average of €3-10/m3. In contrast, demand for Bubinga logs pushed prices up by €8-10/m3 and Bilinga up by €10-15/m3 on buying for India. The less familiar species not usually traded into Europe showed small gains of €2-5/m3.

ENGLAND

Illegal logging is a hot topic in the global timber trade. At the latest Institute of International Affairs conference at Chatham House in London, Defra minister Huw Irranca-Davies opened the event with stark statistics that underlined how far there still is to go in the war to eradicate a trade that “robs people and encourages corruption across national boundaries.” Irranca-Davies emphasized the need for sustainable management of forests. Governments, he said, lose US\$5bn in revenue annually through illegal logging. Around two thirds of all logging in Indonesia and 50 percent of Cameroon’s logging is illegal. Utilizing timber procurement rules, providing aid to supplier countries and backing due diligence timber sourcing, Irranacca-Davies reaffirmed the UK government’s own commitment to the fight, assessing suppliers to minimize the risk of handling illegal wood.



HUNGARY

The volume of industrial production recently declined by 1.1 percent, industrial gross output decreased by 19.6 percent.

BUSINESS TRENDS
(CANADA)

ONTARIO

Primary and secondary manufacturers continue to seek a balance in pro-

Import/Export Wood Purchasing News

duction necessary to meet the market’s needs. For many, achieving that balance has been difficult, because demand for hardwood lumber and finished goods has not found a level point. Consumer confidence remains low, and spending is restricted to necessities rather than durable goods, such as furniture, cabinets, flooring, and other hardwood construction materials. In addition, lending continues to be tight, even to the most creditworthy potential borrowers. In the meantime, contacts acknowledge businesses are in survival mode, waiting for improvements in markets for hardwood products or enough fallout in production to provide stability.

There is limited market activity for Ash comment some contacts. Supplies are not overwhelming at this time, with prices mixed depending on regions contacted. There is limited market interest for Basswood. Quantities are down and prices are being affected by outside competition. Beech is also suffering, due to the decreased demand for manufactured goods and increased supply competition from other species. The weak and declining U.S. housing sector, along with demand tapering off, are challenging Birch markets.



The regionally important species Hard Maple’s business conditions are unstable and markets have contracted. Producers have cut back production, lowered their output and inventories starting with timber and log procurement through secondary manufacturing of consumer and industrial goods. The heavy winter snowfall in many parts of Ontario and Quebec could have an impact on log availability during spring. This could cause a decrease in Hard Maple supplies. Buyers are limiting their purchases of kiln-dried stocks, however, purchasing only what they need in exact items and quantities. Soft Maple supplies are ample to meet a reportedly flat to declining demand, and these unstable conditions are keeping prices unsettled for this species.

The economic downturn continues to be felt across the country with many mill closures, either permanently or temporarily with varied return-to-work timeframes that are heavily dependent on the U.S. economic recovery. The latest casualty of these difficult times is Tembec’s Mattawa hardwood sawmill which closed, resulting in 59 job losses.

The federal government’s January budget containing plans to spend \$1.5 billion CDN on new initiatives to help the country’s forestry industry was welcome news for some in the industry. They felt that government heeded some of the requests made by the Forest Products Association of Canada. Natural Resources Minister Lisa Raitt stated that the federal budget contained three new forestry-related initiatives. These include: a \$1 billion community adjustment fund, to help rural areas adapt to the changing economic climate; more than \$100 million to invest in the development of emerging technologies for the forest sector, including forest biomass utilization and the development of next-generation forest products; and \$50 million to promote the forest sector abroad. Others feel that the \$1 billion investment into the community adjustment fund is “good mitigation” for forest-dependent communities, but does nothing to aid struggling forest companies. It is felt, however, that the \$150 million investment to develop

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**BUSINESS TRENDS
(CANADA)**

Continued from page 26

emerging technologies and promote the forest industry abroad will be helpful to companies.

According to TD Securities' February 16 weekly report, Canadian manufacturing shipments plunged by their largest margin on record, falling by 8.0 percent M/M, which was far worse than the 5.3 percent M/M drop expected by the markets. The decline comes on the heels of the 6.2 percent M/M drop recently, and was the fifth consecutive monthly fall in this indicator. The 3-month annualized trend now stands at -45.9 percent, which is almost double the 26.7 percent pace of decline in November, and on a year ago basis, sales are down 6.5 percent Y/Y. The drop in shipments was more or less across the board, with 20 of the 21 industries posting declines. There were dramatic declines in the sales of wood products (down 12.3 percent M/M).

The report states: "This is yet another reminder that the Canadian manufacturing sector has now become a major casualty of the ongoing global economic recession, and there is little to suggest a reversal in fortune any time soon. In fact, with new orders falling a further 12.9 percent M/M in December, we expect things to get even worse in the coming months as businesses retrench their purchases even more. And with the pace of real shipments remaining in negative territory, the Canadian manufacturing sector is expected to remain a source of drag on economic activity for some time."

QUEBEC

With the reduced demand for interior products made of Red Oak, and other species as well, it is certain that the lower demand for these products in the construction and renovation sectors is affecting hardwood businesses. Red Oak is fighting for its marketplace with whitewoods and other close-



grained species, which are the current trend. Sales of Red Oak is reportedly intense in most regions. As a result, prices have slid down sharply

in response to these pressures.

Domestic and international demand for White Oak is ongoing in markets. Prices are mixed, however.

The hardwood flooring industry is facing growing challenges. Saleability has become an issue for many companies. Some are questioning whether the demand for flooring at the present time is sufficient to keep them in business. There is a wide range of prices surrounding the sale of Oak strip flooring comment some producers. Cash flow is tight, and payment terms are extended out in certain instances.

Raw material demand for the wood pallets and containers' industry has fallen in conjunction with the U.S. economy.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) first quarter Housing Market Outlook, Canada Edition report notes that housing starts reached 211,056 units in 2008, a decrease from 228,343 in 2007. Starts are expected to be about 160,250 for 2009 and about 163,350 for 2010.

"The new home market is moderating due to a number of key factors," said

CMHC's Chief Economist. "The economic downturn will result in a decrease in demand for home ownership leading to a decline in housing starts and existing home sales in 2009. Housing market activity will begin to strengthen as the Canadian economy rebounds in 2010 and the level of housing starts over the forecast period will be more in line with demographic fundamentals."

Existing home sales, through the Multiple Listing Service (MLS®), are expected to decline 14.6 percent during 2009 to 370,500 units, continues the report, but increase 9.3 percent to 405,000 units in 2010. The average MLS price is also expected to decrease over the course of 2009. Average prices are forecast to be \$287,900 for 2009, a decline of 5.2 percent, while 2010 will see little change from 2009 average prices.

According to the report, the downturn in economic activity and in the employment market will lead to housing starts that will vary from 141,000 to 180,000 in 2009 and much the same range in 2010. Both singles and multiples will see declines in 2009.

Forecasts for economic growth by private sector forecasters have been revised down significantly in recent months. In October of last year, the average forecast for Canadian GDP growth in 2009 was 1.1 percent. By the first quarter of this year, this average forecast for Canadian GDP growth in 2009 was revised down to -0.7 percent.

The new home market is moderating due to four key factors. These are: strong house price growth between 2002 and 2007 which has tempered home ownership demand particularly in Western Canada; the record high levels of new listings have increased the competition from the existing home market and reduced spillover demand; pent-up demand that built up during the 1990s is nearly exhausted and new home construction will become more aligned with long run demographic demand; and, uncertainty about the economic outlook remains high and is a contributing factor restraining demand for home ownership.

Overall, housing starts will decline in all areas of Canada over the course of 2009. The largest declines will be seen in Western Canada and Ontario. By 2010, however, eight of ten provinces will see positive growth in housing starts; starts will continue to decrease in British Columbia and taper off in Quebec.

All 10 provinces in Canada will see fewer single-detached starts during 2009; Ontario at a decrease of 26.1 percent to 23,000 units. In all provinces, declines will be at least 10 percent.

Moving into 2010, however, a betterment of economic prospects across Canada will help to push single-detached starts up in all regions except British Columbia and Quebec. Alberta and Saskatchewan are expected to lead the rebound with growth of 11.8 and 9.1 percent respectively.

Despite the increasing popularity of multi-family housing (row, semi-detached, and apartment units), the multiple starts segment will also see moderation this year. For 2009, it is expected that multiple starts will decrease to a level ranging between 75,200 and 96,200 units. The largest declines will occur in Western Canada.

Heading into 2010, however, economic prospects are expected to become more positive. Because of this, nine of ten provinces will see positive growth in the construction of multiple-family units. Multiple starts will still be in a range of 74,400 to 95,400 units in 2010.



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BUSINESS TRENDS (U.S.A.)

LAKE STATES

As the global economical crisis continues, sources in the Lake States region appear to be feeling the downturn but there are still some bright spots. For most of the area, Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) Certification is either already attained or high on the list of priorities.

A Wisconsin window and door-manufacturing source said that the company initiative for 2009 was planned and centered on FSC certification and green products.

The contact stated that while business was slow and competition fierce, green products were in demand for the orders that were coming in. "Specialty items are moving right now. Those that are spending, have the reserve to do so and they want environmentally sound products," he said. "Those products are accounting for the majority of orders."

The source also commented that "Rustic Alder is hot and Oak seems to be making a bit of a resurgence; Maple has plateaued and Cherry is the most challenging."

Also in Wisconsin, the Department of Natural Resources recently tripled its FSC certified land. A third party auditing and certification of forest management operations, Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) recently awarded Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. This puts the states FSC certified land at a total of 1.5 million acres, which is three times the initial area first endorsed in 2003.

"We congratulate Governor Doyle and the department of Natural Resources for expanding their FSC-endorsed certification lands," said SCS Senior Vice President, Dr. Robert Hrubes, who is also the head of SCS's FSC-accredited Forest Conservation Program.

"Conformance with the rigorous FSC standard assures the public that Wisconsin DNR continues to practice exemplary forest management." Wisconsin's efforts along with others in the Lakes States are helping to establish the region as a forest certification economic hub.

Matt Frank, DNR secretary commented, "Wisconsin's leadership is steadily advancing the tide of verified responsible forestry. DNR began in 2003 with Governor Jim Doyle's "Grow Wisconsin" initiative to secure forest certification recognition for the state's land management programs.

Wisconsin DNR's management of multi-use lands involves balancing the goals of conserving forestland, supporting economic activities, protecting wildlife habitat, and providing recreational opportunities.

The certification is helping Wisconsin and others in the region to remain competitive in global markets that increasingly demand certified raw materials. More than 1,850 companies in the state utilize wood to produce nearly \$20 billion of forest products every year. More than 300,000 jobs in Wisconsin rely on the forest products industry.

In reference to the financial crisis as a whole, the window and door manufacturer said that while the state of the economy is troubled, the mill shut-downs could bring more trouble. "We're a small company and it's difficult to run in a thing like this. You count on strong suppliers and markets," he added. In order to adjust, the contact said they were cutting cost, inventory and labor.

In Indiana, a hardwood lumber supplier commented, "I think our government is working to try to assist us to promote the fact that the North

Import/Export Wood Purchasing News

American hardwood industry is a sustainable industry."

The source also said with an emphasis on the RV sector the local market was challenging. "We do business all over the United States, but as far as where we are right here in northern Indiana, it's a very tough climate. Because there was a large amount of hardwood consumption by the RV industry, that industry is taking a beating," he said. "There are a lot of closures and layoffs."

The contact did say that Walnut was the faster moving species with White Oak and Hard Maple a close second and third. "We still have plenty of bright spots," he offered. As for the slowest moving item, he also noted Cherry to be challenging. Marketing products to distributors and end users he commented that his customers were watching costs, keeping inventory levels low and only buying what they need.

When asked about the factors involved with the current market the source stated, "I think the credit market has a lot to do with it. The demand is still there. People want to build, they want to remodel but banks are more apprehensive with tighter underwriting standards. I think people are nervous based on unknown future economic conditions," he said.

A Michigan builder commented that he thought the economic stimulus package might hurt the economy rather than help. "The money is not going to the right places, it's not going to help the building industry," he said. "I don't think the government is actually thinking about what the priorities are, there is still a lot of hand outs and people are starting to look at that with a critical eye. Personally I think the stimulus package is making people nervous instead of bringing peace of mind."

The contact said that indicators suggested a pick up for his market in 2010. "I think the private market needs to get sorted out and reassess and refresh itself in a way that will be productive." He added that he was adjusting to the housing downturn by watching overhead expenses and looking at every opportunity to earn sales. "In a good economy sales come to you, in a poor economy you have to go out and find them. So our sales staff has been very aggressive along those lines."

•

SOUTHEAST

According to sources in the Southeastern region, railroad ties are selling like "hot cakes," but they may well be the only cake that's hot. While the ties are in steady demand most suppliers in the area said other markets are flat. However a few noted some bright spots in specialty and flooring markets. With the advent of the economic stimulus plan some are doubtful that it will offer help and others are optimistic about the amount of time it will take to help.

An Arkansas hardwood lumber supplier stated, "The only thing that folks are selling across the board, are railroad ties. Lumber or any kind of mill-work product and even flooring is just extremely depressed," he said. He also offered that his customers (mill-work, cabinet, and flooring manufacturers) were ordering on an as needed basis. "Everybody is keeping very low inventory. Having a 'just-in-time' inventory is important now more than ever," he said. "If you don't have it in stock or if you can't get it within a day or two they'll find it elsewhere."

The source mentioned lack of demand in the housing market and poor lending practices as the top reasons for economic slowdown. "Lowering of standards and zero col-

**BUSINESS TRENDS
(U.S.A.)**

Continued from page 28

lateral loans where extremely poor judgment was used has come back to bite us. It has taken 10 years, but that's what happened," he said.

Regarding the oversupply of houses on the market the source commented, "That's a wide umbrella and it affects both the hardwood and softwood industries. Until people start buying houses again to consume the excess for several months, our industry will come back."

Holding on to "as much working capital as possible," the contact said to adjust to the current market, he has shut down one of two sawmills indeterminately, cut labor hours down to 32 hours from 44, and reduced inventory.

For the state of Arkansas, 47,000 people are directly employed by the forest industry with 1 in every 6 manufacturing jobs involved in the production of forest products.

In an attempt to save those jobs along with millions of others, recently signed, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ACT), may jumpstart the economy. The ACT includes plans to modernize infrastructure in the United States, enhance energy independence, expand educational opportunities, provide tax relief and improve affordable housing. Chief Kimbell with the United States Forest Service said, "With the funds provided by the ACT, the Forest Service Economic Recovery Program will immediately create jobs in land stewardship, infrastructure repair and conversion and in the production of energy from wood."

For Green building provisions, \$6 billion was included in the stimulus plan to improve federal buildings. According to the Hardwood Federation this may be an opportunity to introduce more hardwoods as building materials since the final bill did not focus solely on plans such as LEED.

Another \$20 billion in funding will go towards renewable energy projects. These provisions are to help renewable energy projects survive by providing tax incentives and additional tools to deal with the tightening of the credit market, which put several projects on hold. At press time much of the federal money is expected to be sent to states as block grants to allow for expedited distribution.

An Atlanta hardwood sawmiller with a dimension plant, flooring plant and a S4S facility said that flooring recently picked up but lumber was off. "I'm selling very little lumber," he said. "In fact I just ran some White Oak through the flooring plant because it didn't sell." The contact also noted that FAS Red Oak was the slower moving item. Along with others in the region, crossties are moving well for the supplier. "We were selling switch ties for a while but now its just crossties," he said. He also noted that his S4S facility was doing well. "In recent weeks, we've had a lot of orders in that facility."

A Mississippi sawmiller said business was spotty and demand was weak. "The industrial side is showing signs of weakness now. There is just nothing moving. The industrial mat timbers have slowed down. The tie business is still going, but it's only crossties. The switch tie market is dead," he said. "It's really a challenge to find ways to produce and move the product."

The source also offered some candid remarks about the "green" aspect of the industry. In his opinion, "It's a farce, a lot of third party individuals who are hiding behind the curtain of "certification" and leeching money from an already sustainable industry,"

he said. Overall the region seems to be spotty. With some areas doing mild business and others at a standstill, most commented a hope for an uptick by early 2010.

WEST COAST

In the face of the poor economy, keeping inventory on the ground for just-in-time orders is making or breaking sales for the West Coast. Sources across the region say that lead-time is currently the best way to remain on the competitive edge. And in spite of the weak worldwide demand, sources say there are bright spots in coastal shipping as well

A hardwood lumber, moulding and flooring supplier, Steve Ondich of Atlas Lumber in Chino, Calif., said, "The demand we're seeing is for just-in-time orders. Keeping inventory ready for immediate shipment has landed us some nice orders." Referring to current economical woes of the industry, he commented that those who thought they were in a protected market (ultra high-end, commercial, etc.) are now singing the blues along with everybody else. "The slowing economy has crept into almost all sectors. It started last year in tract residential. This year, commercial building and custom residential have followed suit," he said.

As to the factors in play, Ondich held the bank crisis largely accountable. "Profitable companies do not have access to credit through no fault of their own," he said. "There are over a dozen mills now stocking hardwoods in warehouses throughout Southern California leaving local distributors leery of competing against mills for unit quantity business." Ondich also made mention of equipment auctions being more common than ever before. "There have been several high-profile equipment auctions this year. I've never seen high-end equipment go so inexpensively," he said. "I am certain the lack of bidders is a direct result of overcapacity."

President and CEO Gordon Houston, Port Metro Vancouver, commented, "We are certainly not immune to the effects of current economic conditions, but at the same time a number of factors, such as our high degree of diversification and focus on the Canadian market, have allowed Port volumes to remain relatively stable compared to many of the Port's competitors."

"Our Port's statistics clearly reflect the interconnectedness of global trade," he added. Officials say bright spots include coal volumes that increased by three percent, crude oil also increased modestly at three percent while gasoline surged by almost 50 percent. "The ongoing downturn in the economy and erosion of consumer confidence led to a decline in container imports in the latter part of 2008, while wavering demand and letters of credit issues had an effect on containerized exports of forest products and specialty crops," Houston said in reference to the decrease in forest product exports.

A hardwood lumber supplier source in Oregon said that exports were at an "even keel" for the company. "We are a major player in the coastal market and our domestic business has taken a few minor hits recently," he said. "But exports haven't declined as much for us as other's." The source attributed the company's ability to stay above water in a challenging market to innovative equipment, solid relationships abroad and quality working relationships with employees. "Over the years we have built many relationships at home and abroad. Our

Continued on page 30



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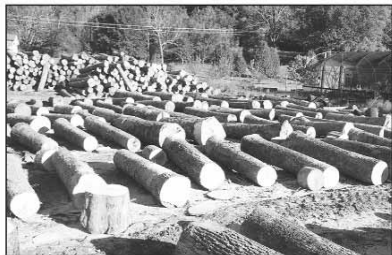
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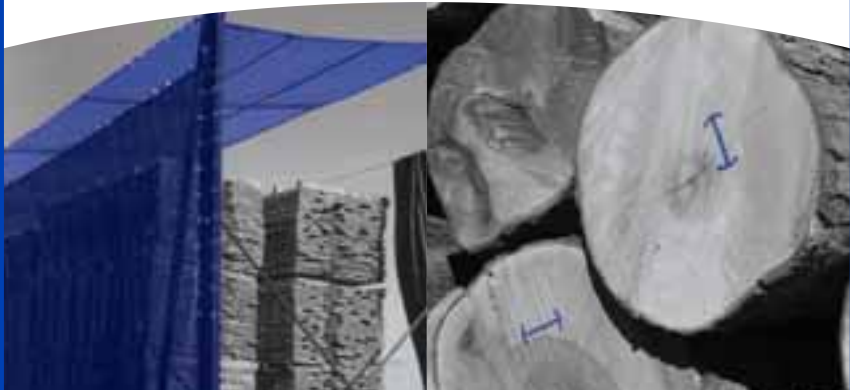


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BUSINESS TRENDS (U.S.A.)

Continued from page 29

employees are some of the best you can find, most of them have been with us 15 years or more. You can't survive in times like these without good people and good relationships," he said. The contact also stated that Alder and Maple were steady movers but Birch was falling off and Ash was the slowest moving species.

When asked for his take on the housing crisis, the contact said in his opinion, there is a need for a housing construction freeze. "All planning and zoning needs to be halted and instead we need to build rails and schools," he said. "The housing crisis would decline if we only allowed new housing to be built in areas located near mass transit and get rid of some of the 'McMansions' that people knew they couldn't afford when they built."

Recently the National Association of Home Builders Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI) again released single digits, rising only a single point. Clear indications that homebuilders have seen essentially no improvement in the market for new single-family homes, NAHB Chairman, Joe Robson commented, "Clearly, the market for new single-family homes remains very weak at this time. However, looking forward we are certainly hopeful that the newly passed economic stimulus bill which includes some favorable elements for first-time home buyers and small businesses, will have a positive impact that will help get housing and the economy back on track," he said.

According to McGraw-Hill Construction's 2009 Construction Outlook the level of overall U.S. construction starts is expected to decline 7 percent to \$515 billion, which follows a 12 percent decline predicted for 2008. Also predicted in the report, single-family housing for 2009 at two percent along with a four percent drop in the number of units to 560,000. Multifamily housing is expected to retreat six percent in dollars and eight percent in units while commercial buildings are forecasted to drop 12 percent in dollars and 15 percent in square feet.

NEWSWIRES

Gulfport, Mississippi—Newman Lumber Co., located here, recently became certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Founded by Roy Newman, Newman Lumber Co. is a Mahogany and tropical wood supplier. According to the company's Web site, Newman Lumber has been "serving the world with Mahogany and other tropical woods since 1947" and offers such species as Mahogany (Genuine, Honduras, Tropical American and African), Swietenia Macrophylla, Spanish Cedar, Sapele, Cedro, Cerejeira, South American Oak, Roble and Jarrah.

Switzerland—PEFC International, headquartered here, recently announced the endorsement of the Russian National Forest Certification System (RNCFC). Developed by a multi-stakeholder, the RNCFC will now be able to contribute significantly to the global certified wood efforts and advance forest management in Russia.

Import/Export Wood Purchasing News

Secretary General of the Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), Ben Gunneberg commented on the plan. "Despite the current global economic crisis, there is still an increasing demand for certified wood based products that require an increased supply of timber from certified, sustainable managed forests," he said. According to estimates, the commitment by global certification organizations in Russia may increase the area of certified forest by one-third over the next ten years, which would bring the total to more than 400 million hectares.



The two global markets for Russian timber are Asia and Europe. With the considerable growth of certified chain-of-custody, the new supply of certified timber will be welcome in this region.

Union City, Indiana—Frank Miller Lumber Co. (FML), located here, recently announced that Mark Miller has returned to the family owned and operated company. A graduate of Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., Miller is responsible for sales in the central U.S., the Southeastern states and export sales in the Middle East and Asia.

Millers great-grandfather, John Miller, in 1903 founded the company. Situated on 20 acres in the state line community of Union City, Indiana, the company has remained in the same location and in the same family ownership for all of its 100 years.

FML specializes in quarter-sawn hardwoods, specifically Red and White Oak, Walnut, Cherry, Hard Maple and Hickory.

Turbotville, Pennsylvania—

Bingaman & Son Lumber Inc., located here, recently began stocking a range of grades in Pacific Coast Red Alder lumber. Referring to the newly added species, a spokesperson for the company said, "Alder is one of the most versatile woodworking materials available, with superior turning and polishing properties." Bingaman Lumber maintains an average inventory of 2.5 million board feet of kiln-dried lumber in 13 different species: Alder, Basswood, Beech, Birch, Cherry, Hickory, Poplar, Hard and Soft Maple, Walnut, White Ash and Red and White Oak.

Incorporated in 1968, the company includes a main lumberyard in Kreamer, a second yard in Clarendon, and sawmills in Mill Hall and St. Marys. All facilities are located in the Appalachian Mountains of Pennsylvania.

Dallas, Texas—East Teak Hardwoods Inc., located here,



Matt Mladenka

announced a new product, 'Accoya' at a recent International Builders Show. A distribution agreement with manufacturer, Titan Wood, the product is made by performing an acetylation process on various species, such as Radiata Pine, Southern Yellow Pine and Beech. The attributes of the new prod-

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NEWSWIRES

Continued from page 30

uct include dimensional stability, UV resistance, source certified sustainability, non-toxic and insect and fungi resistant. Marketing and sales director, Matt Mladenka said, "Thanks to these features, Accoya® Wood is the perfect new wood for exterior applications including decking, siding, doors and windows." For more information about Accoya® Wood contact Matt Mladenka at 972-979-9229.

Cardiff, Wales—BluWood International Corp., a licensee of WoodSmart Solutions Inc. headquartered in Vancouver, B.C., recently opened a new sales office here, naming Jerry Wilson as country manager. Robert Seaman, president of BluWood International, said BluWood, a two component, factory-applied, protective coating system for wood, has quickly gained in popularity overseas because of its lifetime warranty against mold fungus growth, rot fungi and wood ingesting insects. "We have received an incredible response from forest products industry representatives in Australia and New Zealand," he said. "We're shipping product and chemical to South Korea, and we have a lot of interest in Japan. We also spent some time in China recently with some important people in the furniture industry." BluWood has been most popular with homebuilders, but has made inroads with manufacturers of shakes and shingles, siding, furniture, windows and doors. Seaman said the firm has performed exceptionally well in Europe, where it is a member of the United Kingdom Green Building Council (UK-GBC). "We just returned from a show in Sweden, and the response was fantastic," he said. "We've also received a lot of interest in Turkey, Italy and Romania." BluWood is currently working through fire retardant tests for its product in the European Union, Japan and Australia. In conclusion, Seaman said, "We're looking forward to making a big splash in a number of areas in 2009. We plan to have offices all throughout Europe and Asia by the end of 2010."

Milan, Italy—According to a recent "World Furniture Outlook 2009" report from the Italian market research and consulting firm CSIL, furniture demand is expected to continue to decrease in 15 countries (including the United States and much of Europe). Also the report stated that a fair amount of growth in 29 countries including China, Egypt, Russia, India and Kuwait was expected throughout the year and 11 other countries will remain at their current level of activity. CSIL noted that the world economic outlook is "exceptionally uncertain." More information on CSIL and the new report is available at www.csilmi-lano.com.

Memphis, Tennessee—The National Hardwood Lumber Assoc. (NHLA) recently opened its first overseas office. Located in Shanghai, China, previous NHLA Inspector Training School Director, Bob Sabistina will oversee this office. Sabistina has been working in Asia as a consultant for the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC)

since 2005, mainly conducting NHLA grading seminars. As the North American Hardwood industry expands its search for Hardwood lumber markets, the move to a permanent office is a natural progression. "The success of reaching those markets is dependent upon the differentiation of North American hardwoods from the rest of the products," explained NHLA Executive Director, Mark Barford. "Our commitment to the Shanghai office shows our members, the industry and the global market that NHLA is moving forward with our new brand and re-focused message—'Strong Roots, Global Reach.'" The office will operate seasonally and is scheduled to be open from January 2009 until late spring. All international grade inquiries should be coordinated through NHLA Chief Inspector, Mark Horne. "The addition of the office in China allows us to serve our members on a worldwide basis," Barford said. "I encourage members to contact me directly about how best we can use this asset to assist their business." Mark Barford can be contacted by email at m.barford@nhla.com. To contact Bob Sabistina regarding lumber grading seminars or NHLA promotion please email him at b.sabistina@nhla.com.

Jönköping, Sweden—Elmia Wood, located here, recently announced its forestry fair to take place June 3-6, 2009. And according to Torbjorn Johnsen, Elmia's business manager, interest in the event is still high, despite the economic situation. "Right now the total stand area booked is actually higher than before the fair in 2005 and exhibitor numbers are 25 percent above the same month in 2005," he said.

B.C., Canada—According to the British Columbia Council of Forest Industries, the B.C. forest industry is "hanging on by its fingernails," and shutting down capacity to survive. At the recent British Columbia Economic Summit, John Allan, president of the B.C. Council of Forest Industries said, "The industry will ultimately come out of the recession, but in the meantime, business is 'truly, truly hell.'" He addressed the 100 delegates that attended the two-day summit with the facts. "I'd be less than honest with everyone in this room if I didn't tell you that right now the forest industry is hanging on by its fingernails," he said. He further commented that the bulk of the province's forestry sector, the interior industry, has been built around delivering two-by-fours to the U.S. housing construction market and despite new initiatives such as bio-energy and new markets in Asia, "We are going to have to depend on that market for years to come," he said. Three years ago U.S. housing starts topped two million a year, last December they plummeted to 550,000 which is only a quarter of what they were at the housing boom's peak. According to trade journal, Madison's Canadian Lumber Reporter, lumber prices bottomed out recently at \$130 U.S. a thousand board feet, the lowest they have been in 50 years of record keeping. Allan said the interior industry is operating at less than half capacity overall. "Demand continues to be poor and I



Bob Sabistina

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NEWSWIRES

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think the prognosis is, this is going to be a pretty bleak year, perhaps even into 2010. Each company has said individually that it makes more sense to take downtime," he said.

Alexandria, Virginia—The International Wood Products Association (IWPA), located here recently announced the addition of Zenova (M) Sdn. Bhd. A manufacturer and exporter of plywood, laminated board and blockboard, the company is located in Sabah, Malaysia. For more information about Zenova and its products, visit them online at www.zenova.com.my.

Memphis, Tennessee—The National Hardwood Lumber Association (NHLA) recently announced that its grading rules committee intends to review the rules pertaining to imported hardwoods. The International Wood Products Assoc. (IWPA) Lumber Committee agreed it would participate in the process. The existing rules were reviewed by the IWPA and proposals for revisions and additions were made. The work output is in survey form and all members are encouraged to complete the survey and add additional comments. According to a recent issue of the IWPA newsletter, the rules were last updated in January 2009. For more information visit www.iwpa-wood.org.

Washington, D.C.—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced revisions to its plan to enforce the declaration requirement for imported wood (plant) products. Revisions include extending the length of each enforcement period from three to six months and providing a clearer list of products that are part of each phase. APHIS will hold a public comment period on the products covered under Phases III and IV of the revised plan. The IWPA will submit comments petitioning for a delay for declarations on plywood, fiberboard, and particleboard. IWPA members are invited to provide input to staff or submit independent comments.

Prince George, B.C.—The Council of Forest Industries (COFI), located here, recently announced that the COFI convention has been postponed due to current economic conditions. A Council representative said that member companies, sponsors and exhibitors are curtailing travel and discretionary spending as a result of current economic conditions as they focus all available resources on their operations. The convention will be reconsidered over the coming months.

Vancouver, B.C.—Steve Swanson, President of the family-owned Swanson Group in Oregon and Chairman of the Coalition for Fair Lumber Imports, recently participated in a panel discussion before the Truck Loggers Association's convention in Vancouver. Swanson highlighted the Coalition's support for full bi-lateral free trade in logs, cautioned against temptation to provide new SLA incon-

sistent aid to Canada's forestry industry and reiterated the Coalition's position that the recent changes in the BC interior stumpage system that have dramatically increased the use of 25 cent stumpage to produce softwood lumber constitute a clear violation of the Softwood Lumber Agreement.




Steve Swanson

Swanson stated that "both U.S. and Canadian industries are experiencing some of the most difficult market conditions in history," adding that Canada's federal and provincial governments should resist the temptation to increase already large subsidies in violation of the SLA. "Log export controls have frustrated free and fair competition in North America by creating and sustaining an artificial, price-depressing oversupply of fiber in Canada," Swanson said. He added that removing all BC log export controls would go a long way towards eliminating the distorting effects of government intervention, eliminating an important cornerstone of the provincial subsidy system and would allow BC taxpayers to reap the full value of their natural resource. "The log export controls artificially depress Canadian fiber prices," Swanson said, adding that, "removing them would constitute a significant step towards resolving the cross-border dispute." He said that the Coalition shares the BC Truck Loggers Association's view that restraints on log exports in Canada should be lifted. "Canada has imposed anti-dumping and subsidy duties on imports of Chinese steel and aluminum products for similar reasons." Concluding, Swanson stated that he believes "the Softwood Lumber Agreement has the potential to be an effective alternative to a resumption of trade litigation," but to do so the agreement must be honored before it can serve as a platform for constructive dialogue to bring both sides closer to a permanent resolution to this 150-year old cross-border trade dispute.

Washington, D.C.—The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) levied annual fees on timber company chain-of-custody certificate holders by up to 400 percent. The scale angers some companies and timing of the increase, but FSC says the move will raise money for furthering the organization's work and provide additional services.

FSC added that its trademark would prove increasingly important to companies trying to differentiate themselves in the current difficult market conditions. The fee increase for accreditation administration is on a sliding scale based on turnover, with the largest companies seeing the biggest jump. A trader in the UK said its bill had grown from £500 to several thousand pounds, which was described as "madness", especially given the economic climate. The trader advocated a gradual fee increase instead. Fees will generally rise by £100 for smaller companies. Global development managing director for FSC, Liza Murphy hinted at some resistance from certificate holders to the increase but said the fee had not been increased in over five years, during which time the FSC certification concept had proved suc-

Continued on page 33



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NEWSWIRES

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cessful, with increasing participation and market recognition.

Murphy said FSC's ability to raise funds from traditional fundraising channels has decreased at the same time as demand for its services had increased.

"The percentage increase is significant in some areas but the effective rate of fees is still extremely low."

FSC's 13,000 certificate holders will have expanded services that include a dedicated service for all users of the trademark, to be piloted in July, as well as new tools and training for certificate holder's sales staff.

The fee change is the beginning of phase one, an effort to reform FSC fees and services. New fee structures for new customers will be piloted in the second half of 2009.

OBITUARIES

MARC BÖHLKE

Hyde Park, Ohio—Marc Böhlike, executive Vice President and managing director of M. Böhlike Veneer Corp. recently passed away.



"Marc was a kind and caring person with a great sense of humor," said his close friend, Andrew Ritch, of Cincinnati. "His

ality made him, quite simply fun to be with. He will always be remembered as a wonderful friend to many, many people and it just seems impossible to believe that he is no longer with us."

Böhlke was educated as an architect but grew up working in his family's wood veneer business, founded by his father, Manfred Böhlke, in Fairfield, Ohio. He quickly became recognized as an industry leader after beginning his career culminating with the direct responsibility for all of the corporation's domestic and international sales.

According to close friends, Böhle loved outdoor activities such as boating, biking, camping, hiking, snowboarding and golf, but he enjoyed

spending time with his family and friends on family sailing adventures or at home the most.

His wife, Anna Cunningham Böhlke; children, Nicholas, Isabella, Sebastian and Francis; and his parents Manfred and Katrin Böhlke, all of Hyde Park, survive Böhlke.

Donations to Böhlike's name may be made to Children's Hospital Medical Center, 3333 Burnet Avenue/MLC 9002, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45229.

JOHN MAYFIELD BRAZIER

Tacoma, Wash.—John Mayfield Brazier, CEO of Brazier Forest Industries in Oregon recently passed away after an eight-month battle with pancreatic cancer. A graduate of the University of Washington in 1956, he served four years as an officer in the United States Navy and founded Brazier Forest Industries in 1965. His three children and six grandchildren survive him. Services were held at Acacia Memorial Park & Funeral Home in Seattle, Wash.

IMPORT/EXPORT CALENDAR

APRIL

6th North China International Furniture and Woodworking Machinery Exhibition, Qingdao, China. Contact: www.nciff.cn. Apr. 17-20.

Dubai International Wood/Wood Machinery Show, Dubai Airport Expo. Contact: 971-4-28-29-299. Apr. 21-23.

National Wood Flooring Assoc., Annual Convention and Wood Flooring Expo, Long Beach Convention Center, Long Beach, Calif. Contact: 800-422-4556. Apr. 28-May 1.

MAY

Interzum, Cologne, Germany.
Contact: www.interzum.com. May
13-16.

LIGNA, Hannover, Germany.
Contact: 49-511-89-32148. May
18-22.

Design Build Australia, Sydney
Convention & Exhibition Centre,
Sydney, Australia. Contact:
www.designbuildexpo.com.au.
May 21-23.

JUNE

Tecno Meuble, Expo
Guadalajara, Guadalajara,
 Mexico. Contact: www.tecnomeuble.com.mx. June 4-6.

**The 14th International Furniture
Exhibition, Dalian, China.**
Contact: 202-463-2720. June 5-
10.

AHEC 14th SEAsia and Greater China Convention, Shenyang, China. Contact: 202-463-2720. June 10-12.

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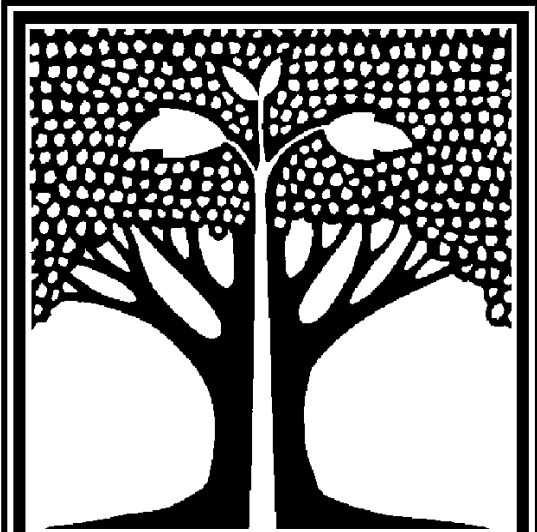


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