

its mission is “to continue to provide our customers with the very best in cutting-edge solutions through our continuous search for the Next New,” said managing partner Joseph Ammar.

The vision of Chabros’ leadership is to continue to grow as a top-class trading company that provides excellent products incorporating value-added service, expertise and information with a high level of coordination skills to ensure customer and project satisfaction. To this end Chabros is always committed to expand its range of products and species to provide original and fresh design solutions to the market. The company has developed into one of the largest distributors of wood, parquet and decking, marquetry and mother of pearl products and is stretched out to represent world renowned names such as Dupont™, Corian® and Montelli®, Richter Stone-Veneer® and Acoustic-Lightboards® as well as Merino HPL & Compact Laminates. It also offers veneer stitching and pressing, sanding, veneer finger-jointing, parquet and exterior decking installation, as well as Teak yacht decking.

The Chabros International Group was founded in 1960 as a wood and veneer supplier in Lebanon and then opened its first branch in Dubai in 1998. In 2009 it expanded its product range significantly and now operates 14 branches and distribution centers throughout the Middle East and North African region. Today it operates its UAE international headquarters, with 30,000 square feet storage in Techno Park, Jebel Ali, where it has extensive showrooms and offices. It has employed up to 200 employees and has completed projects in the U.S. and throughout the MENA region.

Like so many companies in this sector, Chabros is committed to a safer and healthier environment as well as operating practices, since it believes that everyone is impacted by the potential environmental consequences of its actions. The company values the importance not only of preserving the life of trees but encouraging it and applies environmentally healthy practices to ensure the species it trades in are sourced from sustainable and managed forests and sources (in some cases plantations). Its website quotes its philosophy of environmental care as “the stewardship and use of forests land in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfill, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national and global levels and does not cause damage to other ecosystems.” – a definition of Sustainable Forests Management by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). Accordingly Chabros is actively involved in several environmental activities and has successfully acquired certification by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC TT-CO dated 20.4.2011) and PEFC (BMT-PEFC-1049 dated 20.4.01).

Recently Chabros launched its second Showroom “Maisons Et Parquets” for the first time in Dubai on Sheikh Zayed Road following the success of its first branch in Beirut. The showroom is a subsidiary of Chabros Group and it offers

a wide range of parquet flooring, in addition to an exclusive collection of luxurious furniture serving various design tastes. Maisons Et Parquets wood flooring products include both solid and engineered and are offered with “modern designs, rich colors, and innovative textures to reflect timeless beauty, classic looks and outstanding value”. Wood flooring styles are made from common and exotic species, ranging from traditional strip to wide plank (30cm wide), and from smooth to hand scraped designs, available in different colors for residential as well as commercial use. The showroom also offers high quality decking that stands the challenge of time, and also composite decking.

Chabros has supplied material to many prestigious projects including the Mozzo Central and Oceana Palm, Jumeirah. The Nation Towers is an exemplary addition to Dubai’s skyline, comprising two towers that feature world class facilities including luxury high-rise apartments, deluxe office space, a boutique style mall, a beach club and a five-star hotel. Chabros supplied wood and veneer, as well as parquet flooring. The now famous Burj Khalifa skyscraper is a world-class destination and the magnificent centerpiece of downtown Dubai, considered Dubai’s new urban masterpiece. As the world’s tallest building it is surrounded by hotels, must-visit shopping destinations and a world of entertainment options, for which Chabros supplied wood and veneer.

Concourse 3 of the Dubai International Airport provided a welcome boost to capacity and service when it was completed in 2012, where Chabros supplied Dupont™ Corian®, wood and veneer. The first hotel on Dubai Marina, Grosvenor House West Marina Beach by Le Meridien, is destined to be a first in many ways, including setting new standards in hospitality. This 45-story tower is a landmark of luxury and perfection, a flawless Arabian jewel at the center of an exciting cosmopolitan city, to which Chabros was a supplier.

Inspired by the imperial palaces of the Ottoman era, Jumeirah Zabeel Saray is a five-star luxury hotel that does everything in superb style. From its exclusive location on the west crescent of the iconic Palm Jumeirah to the truly spectacular lobby entrance, every detail inspires awe and delight, including the wood materials supplied by Chabros.

The Emaar Arabian Ranches project is one of the exclusive lifestyle communities in Dubai which was developed by Emaar Properties PJSC, for leisure and entertainment with 20 retail outlets including supermarket, cafes and restaurants in the Community Center, supplied by Chabros. Jumeirah Emirates Towers is a city lifestyle destination beyond compare, set in the heart of Dubai alongside Sheikh Zayed Road, a few minutes walking from the Dubai Metro Station. It encompasses a fully integrated five-star business hotel with high octane luxury, setting the scene with 400 spacious rooms and suites, paired with creative meeting and business facilities. Chabros supplied wood and veneer in the public areas.

Finally, the JW Marriott, Abu Dhabi, Resort and Spa is one of the largest hotel developments in the UAE with 350 luxury rooms as well as suites, serviced residences, land bound villas and special over-water villas – each with their own mooring docks for yachts, for which Chabros supplied wood and veneer and

Continued on page 18



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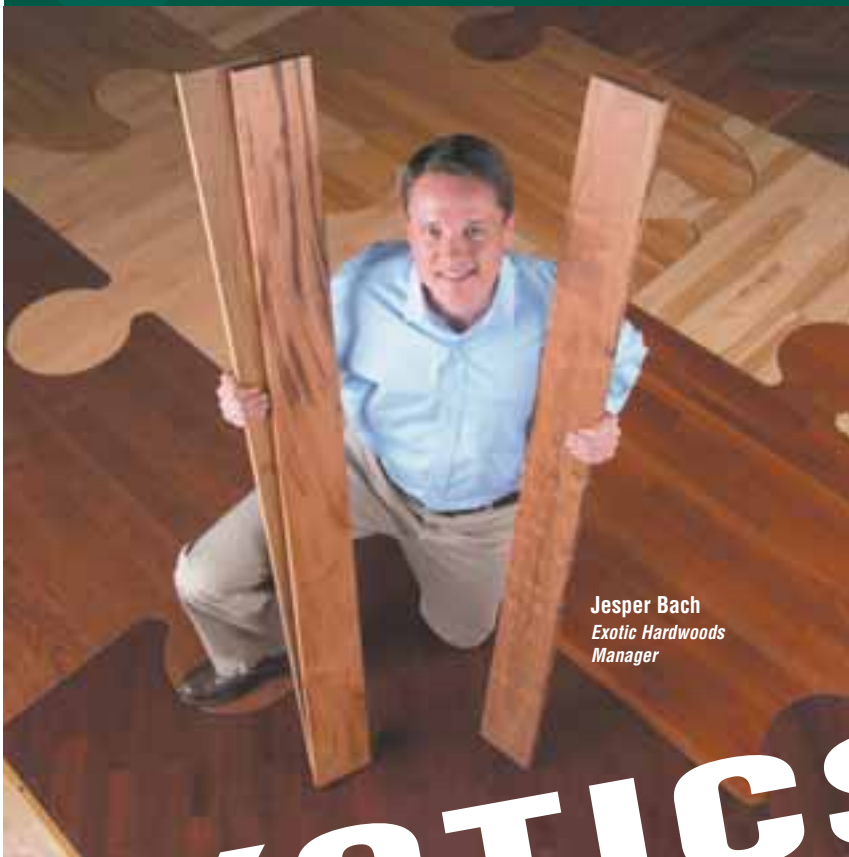
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5/4 FAS 18m'

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4/4 FAS 7.5" wider 18m'

WHITE OAK

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4/4 FAS R2E 4.5" 6m'
4/4 FAS R2E 5" 10m'
4/4 FAS R2E 5.5" 8m'
4/4 FAS R2E 6" 4m'
5/4 FAS 55m'
6/4 FAS 60m'
6/4 FAS 5-6" 12m'
6/4 FAS 6-7" 11m'
8/4 FAS 12m'

POPLAR

4/4 FAS 17m'
4/4 FAS 15/16 15m'
5/4 FAS 17m'
6/4 FAS 20m'
7/4 FAS 40m'
7/4 FAS 12" wider 22m'
8/4 FAS 50m'
8/4 FAS 12" wider 23m'
9/4 FAS 14m'
10/4 FAS 8m'
10/4 FAS 12" wider 14m'

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4/4 FAS 10" wider 30m'
5/4 FAS 10" wider 18m'
6/4 FAS 50m'
6/4 FAS 10" wider 35m'
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CHABROS – Continued from page 15

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USA WOODS – Continued from page 6



Sourcing from Appalachian, Northern and Southern regions, USA Woods has the ability to obtain specific colors and textures of lumber that meet the needs of the most discerning customer.

was Chairman of the Inspection Training School for 5 years. He was voted 2013's Lumberman of the Year by the Lumbermen's Club of Memphis. He has served on the Board of The Agri-center International in Memphis for approximately 10 years. He has two stepsons with his wife Susan and six grandchildren.



Carlsson is quality checking White Oak being surfaced by the Newman planer.

For more information visit www.usawoodsinternational.com. ■

GBM – Continued from page 7



Going to Whistler is an opportunity to get away from the bustle of the city and relax in the ambience of a world-class resort—that is also full of excellent examples of building with wood.

and from Whistler to Vancouver, providing the breakfasts and evening meals/activities and generally just making it a great place to come and do business. All buyers have to do is get to Vancouver. They pay one low flat fee (\$385 CAD)—and we organize it all for them. There is also a well-attended golf tournament at the championship designed Whistler Golf Club during the event for GBM participants, and many activities and adventures available throughout Whistler and the local environs while they are visiting the area."

During the trade show portion of the event, there is the opportunity to meet with Canadian manufacturers of products that include engineered wood products; remanufactured items and components; pre-fabricated housing and structures; log/post & beam/timber-frame homes and structures; millwork and finished building products and specialty lumber including Western Red Cedar—all in a comfortable, networking environment.



Collaborating with the Western Red Cedar Lumber Association, the GBM continues to be a great success for buyers and suppliers alike, with estimates last year of over \$33 million in new business developed.

Continued on page 19

BC Wood knows that in today’s challenging market, it is important to find new sources of high quality, competitively priced wood products and stay on top of new products and changing market needs. Business and building in the U.S. is now growing again and buyers must take the opportunity of meeting as many suppliers as possible and staying open to finding new sources and products. The GBM offers that chance and welcomes buyers from across the U.S. Whether you need reman stock for your manufacturing business in California, shakes and shingles for your customers in Maine or large timbers and high-end millwork for your resort development project in Hawaii—you can find top-notch manufacturers and suppliers at the GBM in Whistler.

If you don’t know if you are on the invitation list already, or would like to be, contact gbm@bcwood.com. You can also visit the website at bcwood.com to find out what kind of companies participate in the event and have a look at the videos and pictures to get a better idea of what goes on over the two and a half days on the Mountain. ■

BUSINESS TRENDS ABROAD

Germany—As reported by the Federal Statistical Office, the construction of a total of 63,900 homes was permitted in Germany so far in 2014. Compared with the corresponding period of 2013, this is an increase of 15.3 percent or 8,500.

In residential buildings, a total of 55,000 new dwellings were approved in the first quarter of 2014, which represents 11.6 percent more than in the same period last year. To this increase mainly apartments in multi (+22.5 percent) and two-family homes (+5.5 percent contributed). Building permits for single-family homes rose only slightly (+ 1.1 percent). ■

Finland—In the first quarter of the year, the Finnish forest industry exports and production showed signs of recovery, according to the Finnish Forest Industries Federation (FFIF). Also, new investments were announced.

“UPM’s announcement regarding an investment at its Kymi pulp mill started off a series of investment news. Metsä Group’s Äänekoski investment and Stora Enso’s Varkaus investment, both announced in April, confirm that the sector has a strong desire to revitalize itself and to grow as well as strengthen its position in the bio-economy market,” said Director General of the Finnish Forest Industries Federation, Timo Jaatinen.

The Finnish Forest Industries Federation’s member companies bought 8.5 million cubic meters of timber from private forests in January-March. This is 25 percent more than in the corresponding period in 2013. Log and pulpwood procurement volumes increased to 3.9 million and 4.3 million cubic meters respectively. In stumpage prices there were no major changes.

Finland’s forest industry’s development and the realization of its investments require sufficient, steady and cost competitive timber availability in the long-term, according to FFIF.

Demand for Finnish wood products showed signs of recovery in some European countries while the strong demand seen in Asia last year tailed off. Domestic demand was very low due to the low level of residential construction.

Finland’s wood products production in the first quarter of 2014 totaled about 2.7 million cubic meters, which is five per cent higher than last year. Plywood production amounted to approximately 310,000 cubic meters, which is 15 percent more than in January-March 2013. Export deliveries in January-February in both product segments were higher than in the previous year.

The first quarter 2014 is showing some tangible, encouraging signs for the Italian woodworking technology on the domestic market, said the Italian Woodworking Machinery and Tools Manufacturers’ Association (ACIMALL). The feeling is that it is going to take long still, but finally “early signs of structural recovery” can be noticed, said Acimall in a press release.

Foreign markets, though slightly shrinking, are still playing a key role for Italian companies, that in recent years have maintained their order volumes thanks to export. This is the key trend emerging from the results of the traditional market survey, carried out by the Acimall Studies office on a statistic sample representing the entire industry.■

China—According to a report issued by Capital Press, the recent years booming Chinese timber demand will begin to slow, due to overbuilding. The statement was made by Rocky Goodnow, a U.S. forest economist at Forest Economic Advisors, at the annual conference of the American Forest Resources Council.

Goodman said that the U.S. exports to China increased log prices during a period when domestic demand from the construction industry was slow. Now, when the U.S. housing is on a recovery mode, “American sawmills are facing high log prices and limited supplies, due to competition with exports to China”, the expert said quoted by Capital Press.

It seems that “this phenomenon is especially apparent on the West Coast, which has the highest log prices in North America, due to its proximity to Asia markets”, he added. Thus, some sawmills have eased their production increases or continued to process logs at a reduced scale, Goodnow said.

Goodnow thinks that as export pressure will begin to slow, U.S. sawmills should become more competitive. Currently, U.S. housing starts are on an upward trend, though they remain below the pre-recession levels. The expert doesn’t see a strong growth in U.S. domestic lumber demand until 2016-2017, “when more young people will form new households.”

By then, there are several factors that will drive Chinese demand for U.S. logs, though at lower levels. One of them is that “Chinese builders have developed a

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BUSINESS TRENDS ABROAD - Continued from page 19

preference for the durable Douglas fir logs, which they use for concrete form-work," he said. They can reuse the wood five or six times, compared to two or three times for New Zealand's Radiata Pine, Goodnow said. "Logging levels in New Zealand are also approaching their limit as far as sustainable harvest, which will hinder exports from that country in the future," he concluded. ■

Myanmar—The export trade for Myanmar timbers became very quiet after the force of the log export ban. A substantial volume of logs purchased for export was not shipped before the deadline and remains in Yangon depots but the Myanmar Timber Enterprise (MTE) has yet to determine the exact unshipped volume.

Observers say that companies with huge volumes of unshipped logs are considering a petition to the authorities. The MTE is saying it began advising exporters to clear logs quickly once it became clear in October 2012 that the ban would be implemented.

Analysts point out that factors such as the weak Indian rupee, high stocks and congested log-yards in India and tight financing hindered prompt shipments to India, the main market for Myanmar logs. It was only in October 2013 that export shipment started to rise, peaking in March 2014.

Export shipments of logs for the 2013-14 financial year were around 661,000 cubic meters of teak logs and 2,013,000 cubic meters of other hardwoods.

Analysts say around 50 percent of the years' teak logs and 46 percent of the total hardwood logs were shipped out in just the last quarter of the financial year.

As the regulations stand at present, unshipped logs will have to be processed locally after which products meeting the required level of processing could be exported. Analysts anticipate lower log prices in upcoming auctions because of the large volumes that will be for sale.

However, once the stock of unshipped logs are utilized prices will better reflect mill requirements for the domestic and international market. Looking ahead, the plan by MTE's is to reduce annual log harvests will likely firm up log prices.

Indonesia—According to sources, back in September 2013, the European Union and Indonesia signed the EU-Indonesia Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA). This agreement acknowledges that Indonesian timber and wood products are being certified through the domestic timber legality verification system (SVLK) as legally harvested and processed, thus complying with the EU Timber Regulation, which became effective in March last year.

Now it seems that after the signing of the VPA, Indonesian wood and wood products exports to the European Union have registered a considerable increase. Indonesian Ambassador for Belgium, Luxembourg, and European Union, Arif Havas Oegroseno, quoted by bisnis.com, said that the export of Indonesia's wood and wood product to European Union within the period of September 2013-March 2014 rose by 7.2 percent to US\$260.3 million compared to the same period of last year when exports reached US\$242.8 million. "We expect the effect of Partnership Agreement between Indonesia and European Union on FLEGT-VPA which has taken its effect since May 1, 2014 will increase to over 25 percent," he said in London, as cited by the same web site. ■

BUSINESS TRENDS CANADA

ONTARIO

Hardwood contacts report that business for key species and grades is strong, with a belief that supplies will likely increase as we head into summer. Buyers are engaged with their sources of supply, keeping in mind the uncertainty of longer-term supply/demand concerns about price vulnerability. They are buying for more short-term needs.

Interest has increased sharply for Ash with the upswing in U.S. residential construction having a positive influence on Canadian businesses. It was noted that the demand from export markets had also risen for this species. Demand for Basswood is even with production, with no excess inventory building to date. There is a concern, however, on the drying side once warmer weather arrives for this species, as well as for other whitewoods. Consumer interest in Hard Maple continues to be strong. Even though residential construction has not peaked yet for the time of year, the continuing increased demand bolstered sales for mouldings, interior finishing products and furniture, thus boosting the raw materials sales to produce them.

On the real estate side, some bankers at Canadian financial institutions say consumers are making larger down payments on their home purchases. The Royal Bank of Canada said that average down payments in its uninsured portfolio of mortgages rose by about 10 percent in the last two years (uninsured mortgages are mainly those where the down payment is greater than 20 percent). Down payments in the bank's insured portfolio (banks must insure mortgages if borrower puts down less than 20 percent) are also increasing.

The rise is not just in terms of dollar value, but also in terms of the percentage that they make up of the mortgage loan, ranging from 35 to 40 percent – a significant rise. The bank feels there's more going on than just rising home prices forcing buyers to put down more money up front, since down payments are rising even in the bank's uninsured portfolio.

Mortgage insurance premiums were expected to rise by about 15 percent on average, effective May 1 with the introduction of new mortgage rules. Premiums vary depending on the size of the borrower's down payment, and can add thousands of dollars to the cost of a mortgage. In recent years, consumers saved more for down payments, due to improved income levels, employment and equity markets. They heeded government warnings on saving more, watching and reducing their debt loads, much of which stem from mortgages. Another factor was

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BUSINESS TRENDS CANADA- Continued from page 20

the tightening of mortgage market rules. This may have lead people to save for larger down payments before taking on a mortgage. Some younger first-time homebuyers received financial assistance from their parents, thus saving on mortgage insurance costs.

The spring housing market got a slow start this year. Existing homes sold in March over the Multiple Listing Service was 4.9 percent higher than a year ago, announced the Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA). In March 2013 the market was still reverberating from tighter mortgage insurance rules that took effect eight months earlier. March 2014's sales level is actually 8.2 percent below the average level of March sales over the past 10 years, and according to a Toronto-Dominion Bank economist it's 30 percent below the peak reached in May 2012.

Everyone is waiting to see if lower mortgage rates and better weather will spur more buyers into action this summer – the most important time of year for home sales. In the long-term, most economists expect mortgage rates and the supply of available homes for sale to rise, putting a lid on home prices. In a number of locations, observers say, low constrained supply is what's holding the market back. ■

QUEBEC

With spring thaw underway and fresh snow hitting some areas, logging conditions deteriorated over March and April. Some mills had enough stocks, they commented, and were not worried.

Ash demand was reported as strong from sawmills, exporters, several overseas buyers and furniture manufacturers. Reports noted that overseas customers were substituting Ash for White Oak. Aspen markets were strong, as well as steady for Basswood sales. Yellow Birch has been stable so far, a producer noted, and he is hopeful it will get better. Flooring and cabinet industry demand for Yellow Birch improved in recent months. Cherry for cabinet manufacturing and to exporters was also reported to be on the rise. Markets for Soft Maple, although not robust, were reported as decent, though not as strong as for Hard Maple, the regionally important species. Flooring manufacturers increased their demand for Red and White Oak for local and export markets. Asian markets, it was noted, had a high demand for Walnut.

Export Development Canada (EDC), the agency responsible for helping to finance and insure exports, says in a new forecast that the U.S. economy should expand by 3 percent this year and by just shy of 4 percent in 2015. Canada's economy, it projects, will grow by 2.2 percent in 2014 and 2.7 percent next year. Notable is its forecast for Canadian exports, which calls for an increase of 2.5 percent this year and a surge of 5.8 percent in 2015.

The drop in the Canadian dollar, EDC adds, will help juice the export market, and could add up to half a percentage point to economic growth this year.

"It's easy to forget that consumers and corporations have been living off the excesses of the past cycle since the 2009 crash," said EDC's chief economist. "That surplus is now gone, and both industry and consumers are having to open up their wallets in a big way."

On the global front, he forecasts growth of 3.7 percent this year and 4.3 percent in 2015.

The forecast is not entirely rosy, however.

"For companies focused on the domestic market, 2014 is likely to be a tough year," he said. "However, it's not all bad news for the Canadian economy, with a number of key indicators suggesting the outlook may not be so bleak."

Globally, as well, it will be "no cakewalk" almost six years after the world melted down.

"The world economy's greatest near-term challenge is the unwinding of extraordinary money policy," he said.

His projections for next year are more optimistic than those of some others, including the Bank of Canada, which forecasts U.S. economic growth of just 3.2 percent and Canadian expansion of 2.5 percent. The International Monetary Fund, meanwhile, projects the U.S. economy will expand by just 3 percent in 2015.

The U.S. manufacturing sector expanded in April and the euro zone private sector started the second quarter on its strongest footing since 2011, while the pace of decline in Chinese factory activity slowed, surveys showed. Factory activity continued to expand in the world's largest economy, but the pace of growth stalled and came in below expectations. However, output growth hit its fastest in three years.

The RBC Canadian Manufacturing Purchasing Managers Index registered 53.3 in March, the 12th consecutive month that the PMI has indicated expansion. The monthly report said there was a solid improvement in business conditions in March, especially with exports, but producers also experienced higher costs due to a weaker Canadian dollar.

The RBC monthly PMI report said the new export orders in March increased at the second-fastest pace since October but input costs rose at the steepest pace since May 2011. The report also noted that manufacturers' production was held back last month by supply disruptions that led to longer delivery times for raw materials.

"Canada's manufacturers have experienced solid conditions for growth in the last year, and March was no different – we saw a nice uptick from a month earlier," said RBC's chief economist. It is expected that a strengthening U.S. economy and a weaker Canadian dollar will lay the foundation for a boost in domestic manufacturing in the short-term. ■

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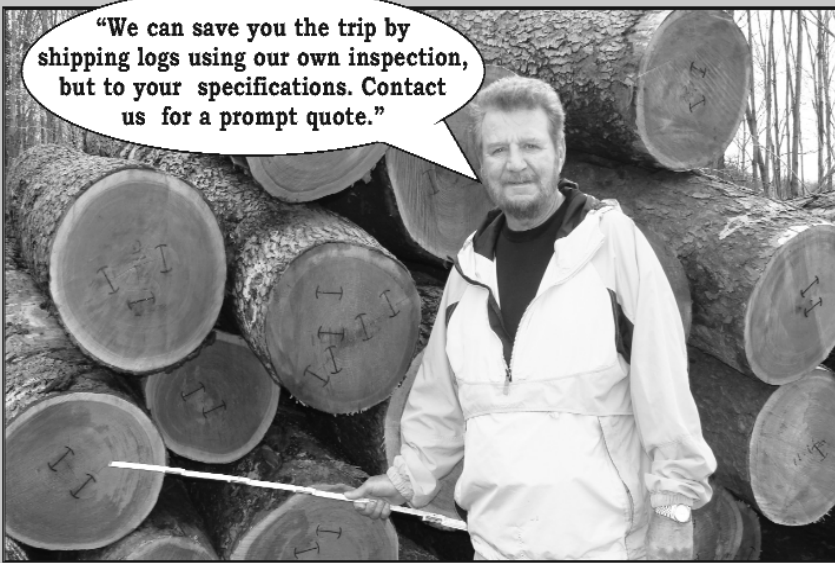
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LAKE STATES

Contacts in the Lake States area report continued strong hardwood market activity. "Hardwood activity got super hot about three or four months ago," a source in Michigan noted. "Availability has picked up now that winter is behind us and orders and demand are still strong."

Handling Maple, Oak, Cherry, Hickory and Ash the contact said secondary species are in high demand. "Walnut, Hickory and White Oak are in big demand. There isn't really a species that is slow right now," he explained.

With inventory levels at about the same pace as 2013, the contact said he believes prices will flatten out on some items but others will increase. "I don't see the prices on any species going down anytime soon."

When asked about transportation he noted, "Trucking has been decent. We've actually seen an improvement from a couple of months earlier."

As for his customer's markets he said, "Most of the people I talk to are staying busy so overall business is strong. I think some items are going to tighten here and there and it may bounce around a little but overall we expect a good year."

A hardwood supplier in Minnesota also indicated business is steady. "Demand has increased to the point supply can't keep up," he said. "The market is absorbing supply as quickly as it becomes available."

The source said his export markets are strong. "Exports have been better than expected this year. Domestic markets got a slow start this year because most regions experienced very hard winters. Production is varied across the country and is largely controlled by weather patterns."

The supplier noted that some sawmills have adequate log decks and others are working from a deficit. "It really depends on what area they're in and if they planned ahead," he explained.

A source in Indiana said, "Some mill owners didn't expect an increase in demand and their production is well below capacity. With warmer weather already settling in we have seen some people scrambling for supply."

As for pricing the contact said, "I don't expect hardwood lumber prices to improve until later in the year. Supply is tight and demand is increasing so the market will reflect those factors."

He indicated transportation issues have not improved since the beginning of the year. "Availability of trucks is a real issue. Pricing is up and down and pretty standard for this time of year. We have loads on the ground that are ready to go, but the trucks are a week out—sometimes two."

As for what he expects in the remainder of 2014, he said, "All of our customers have confidence in the market. The attitude is positive overall. Nobody expects a drop off. The two primary concerns are supply and transportation." ■

NORTHEAST

Hardwood suppliers in the Northeast region commented that business is stable. "We don't see as much urgency from our customers about getting orders on the books," a contact in Connecticut said. "I'm not saying the market is dropping by any means. I think we're settling in to the market. The adjustments that prices have made over the last six to eight months have been pretty radical. People were in a hurry to get everything on the books. But we're not seeing that urgency of rebooking orders. For example, customers will call with inquiries and we'll let them know that we're a week or two out and they aren't booking as quickly as they were. That doesn't mean the market is falling. We're just seeing more of a correction."

He continued, "China is having a major impact on the market. I think single-handedly they are responsible for prices climbing because their diet for material over there has been so strong. Even if they back off a little bit, I don't think the production today is anywhere at the levels to overproduce the market. Our industry has been almost cut in half since 2006. So I think those two factors are a leading part. The third thing would be domestic demand is up. Our economy has improved and that alone will help the mills and the production become tighter as we move forward."

In New York, a hardwood supplier said, "Up in the Northeast we handle three major species, which are Hard and Soft Maple and Ash. Red Oak, Basswood and Birch are secondary, but all species seem to be moving well. Ash is probably moving the best right now."

As for availability of the resource he noted, "Our inventories of logs have been very good and I think we'll make it through without running out of logs. We haven't really seen a downturn in our log supply. It's typical this time of year to see that, but our particular operation is not at critical levels by any means."

With Ash being quarantined in many Northeastern areas he noted, "In the overall impact of the market the resource isn't available as it used to be, which has driven some cases where the material is not available but the market still demands the Ash so that puts a huge impact on that species."

Comparing inventory levels to 2013 he said his numbers are equal. "We may be slightly better for logs right now than we were last year, but mostly we are equal. Prices are up and with the lumber market settling I think we've all come to realize that there is a breaking point and a top dollar point that people are able to pay."

As for individual species, a source in Massachusetts said, "I don't expect pricing of Red Oak to change. Coming into the summer months on the whitewoods you've got drying issues and mills trying to get everything through right now so that they don't get stuck with stain in the hotter months. We're still seeing some slight jumps in the whitewoods such as Hard and Soft Maple and Basswood. I don't predict there is going to be any big run up in pricing. The market is just not going to bear it right now. Consequently logs I presume will be leveling out as well because if you can't get it on the green end you won't be able to get it on the dry end either." ■

Continued on page 23



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SOUTHEAST

In the Southeast region hardwood suppliers reported good business activity. "The market is good right now," a contact in North Carolina said. When asked about the factors involved he said, "Supply is getting better because we've entered warmer weather. Demand has also improved. The global economy seems to be improving gradually as well."

Handling mostly Poplar the source said availability issues are improving. "Up until two or three weeks ago availability was tough but we are starting to get plenty of lumber in now. Our inventory levels are similar to the same time frame last year."

As for pricing he said, "Since supply is improving we may see some leveling off or even some decreases."

He continued, "Transportation issues are not as prevalent as they were early on this year. We hit some tight spots with the onset of spring but we're moving along now."

When asked about what he thinks is ahead in the second half of 2014 he said, "There are a lot of people that are positive. A lot of our customers had good markets at the high point furniture market this year. So they were very pleased and it shows because their orders continue to come in. I think business will remain good. We really don't think it will change a lot. There might be some adjustments in species. Red Oak may go down in price a little bit but other than that I think things will remain about the same."

In Mississippi a hardwood supplier said his markets have been unchanged in recent weeks. "Business picked up for us after Easter and it's been steady since. Loggers have had a difficult time because we've seen massive amounts of rain in our region over the last two months. So supplies are limited but demand is increasing at the same time. We are concerned about having the raw material when we need it."

The source said Oak has been moving more than any other species. "We've seen exceptional demand for Oak coming from our international markets. This in turn is putting pressure on pricing on the domestic end. With domestic demand increasing we don't look for a change in pricing o anytime soon."

A Kentucky wholesaler said his markets are improving and he attributes it mainly to the improvement in weather conditions. "We had a lot of issues with supply so far this year. Now that we are out of the winter and loggers can get into the woods, we are seeing an improvement in supply. Our customers report strong activity in their markets and they don't expect any declines. Specifically for our region rebuilding will be taking place in the coming months due to tornado damage. We certainly hope that supply will be able to keep up with demand." ■

WEST COAST

West Coast hardwood suppliers indicated market activity continues to be on an upward trend. "Availability of kiln-dried hardwood has improved since the beginning of the year," a source in Southern California commented. "Prices have held firm and endusers are begrudgingly coming to grips with their new price points."

When asked about availability issues he noted, "White Oak is the toughest item to source right now. U.S. distribution yards are competing for available inventory with export markets, which is also driving up pricing. Being 1000 miles from the closest port is no longer a barrier to exporting wood."

In Washington, a source said, "Things are picking up in certain areas. I can't really put my finger on it. It's a hit and miss kind of market right now. One thing will get going and the other will fall off a little. However, something is always moving so we're in a strong market."

He said Alder, Poplar and Cherry are his best moving species currently. "There is not a lot of items on the market right now. People are asking for specific products and it's hard to get the items they want. Alder being a West Coast species is even in short supply. There just seems to be a supply problem all over the country right now."

He said his inventory levels are on par with the previous year. "Out here we have the reload centers and we're not bringing in full containers right now, we're just getting from the reloads."

When asked about transportation he said, "Containers are hard to get. The rates have gone up too."

Serving mainly hospitality furniture manufacturers he said his customers are optimistic about the remainder of the year. "The retail stores are hurting but the people we serve on the hospitality side are really moving right now."

Looking ahead he commented, "We'll see what summer brings. For our business summer is typically a slower time of year. Normally we pick up in the fall."

Elsewhere in California a contact said, "Our business is thriving right now. We probably have the best economy because we are in the Silicon Valley area."

When asked about the factors involved he said, "There are some major projects going on out here. There's a new stadium being built for the 49'ers and an extension of the transit system coming from the Northern part of the state down through San Jose. It's all tied in together, the planning is all tied in with the new stadium and there are lots of residential buildings being built."

When asked about species he said, "It's more varied now than it has been in several years. There are times when it seems Cherry or Maple are the most popular items. Walnut in particular has really taken off. The range of what we sell now is varied. There used to be a high percentage of Maple or Cherry. Now we're seeing Ash, which we used to not move at all has really picked up."

As for the remaining six months in 2014, the contact commented, "We see nothing but good things ahead. Our business is strong and we look for continued growth." ■

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NEWSWIRES

Coeur d' Alene, Idaho—Idaho Forest Group (IFG), based here, recently announced a partnership with Austria-based Johann Offner Group to market and distribute cross-laminated timber (CLT) products in the U.S.

The family-owned companies together will market and distribute CLT building systems in the U.S. as soon as this year, said Marc Brinkmeyer, chairman of IFG.

Idaho Forest Group, which distributes lumber all over the U.S. and also exports to Asia, will be the first company to sell CLT in this country, according to Brinkmeyer.

"The time is right," he said. "I've known the Offners since the '90s. We are very close philosophically. We have family values. They've been in business for 250 years—highly respected."

Brinkmeyer has watched development of the engineered wood for about five years and has seen "very cost-effective, attractive buildings" made from CLT components.

"Many leading European architects and builders are using this technology to make significant and appealing structures," he said.

Idaho Forest Group initially will import CLT with an eye toward manufacturing it within 24 to 36 months, he said. It's too early to say where domestic production will occur, he added.

For more information visit www.idahoforestgroup.com. ■



Marc Brinkmeyer

Metairie, Louisiana—The executive committees of the Southern Forest Products Association (SFPA) and Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association (SLMA) have announced plans to reactivate their joint promotional program under the Southern Pine Council (SPC) banner. SLMA Chairman Chris deMilliano of Steely Lumber Company and SFPA Chairman Joe Kusar of Tolleson Lumber Company made the announcement following SLMA's recent Spring Meeting. The first priority of the SPC is to improve export markets for Southern Pine lumber.

The reactivated SPC will be managed by a board of directors, consisting of the respective SFPA and SLMA executive committees. Joe Kusar has been named chairman of the Southern Pine Council, with Chris deMilliano to serve as vice chairman. Bryan Smalley of SLMA has been named director of the Southern Pine Council.

"Both associations look forward to working as one voice for the global promotion of Southern Pine products," stated Joe Kusar. "The Southern Pine Council is an established moniker and can serve our industry for additional areas of cooperation in the future," he added.

"Working together, SLMA member producers can now more efficiently interact with importers and other customers overseas," noted Chris deMilliano. "Online supplier listings will increase the availability of Southern Pine products worldwide," he added.

For more than 30 years SFPA has been a funded cooperator of the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, operating under the American Softwoods banner. SFPA's trade promotion programs include appearances at international trade fairs, trade missions to key markets and direct contact with importers. A network of overseas consultants services inquiries about Southern Pine products, offers trade barrier assistance and manages other activities in the field. A multilingual website—www.southernpineglobal.com—provides a product locator and exporter directory to help importers source Southern Pine lumber from member suppliers. ■

New Orleans, Louisiana—Robinson Lumber Co., located here, recently announced the addition of Shannon Forrest to its sales team.

Continued on page 25

IMPORT/EXPORT CALENDAR

JUNE

American Hardwood Export Council 19th Southeast Asia & Greater China Convention, St. Regis Hotel, Tianjin, China. For more information: www.ahec-china.org. June 25-26

JULY

The 16th China (Guangzhou) International Building Decoration Fair, China Import and Export Fair Pazhou Complex, Guangzhou. Contact: cbd@fairwindow.com.cn. July 8-11

Interbuild Qingdao 2014, 10th China Qingdao International Building & Decoration Materials Exposition, Qingdao International Convention Center, Qingdao. Contact: Tanya@qdhaichen.com. July 19-21 ■

NEWSWIRES Continued from page 24

Forrest will work from his home office in Anderson, SC. A graduate of Clemson University, Clemson, SC, Forrest obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry Management. Previous experience includes 10 years with Baillie Lumber Co. His territories with Robinson Lumber Co. will include mostly Southeastern states.

Forrest is married to Amanda and they have three children: Jacob, Caleb and Joshua. In his spare time he enjoys sailing, hunting and hiking.

Founded in 1893, Robinson Lumber Co. is a family-owned operation marketing hardwood and softwood lumber, flooring, and related products in over 40 countries. For more information visit www.robilmco.com. ■



Shannon Forrest

Alexandria, Virginia—The International Wood Products Association (IWPA) recently announced Chris Connelly, Wood Brokerage International, has assumed the presidency and Joe O'Donnell has been hired to serve as manager of government and public affairs and member services.



Joe O'Donnell

Connelly was elected by a vote of the IWPA Board of Directors. He succeeds Cindy Newman of Newman Lumber Company, who is the outgoing president.

"I am honored that the IWPA membership has elected me to represent them for the 2014-2015 term," said Connelly. "IWPA will continue to work on your behalf to make certain our association is a relevant and strong advocate for the industry and helps grow your business."

"We're excited Joe is joining us as we continue to ramp up our advocacy and outreach to the Administration in Congress. He brings significant political and public policy experience to our team and will be a wonderful asset for our members," said Cindy Squires, IWPA Executive Director.

O'Donnell said, "I am excited to join IWPA at such an important time for the international wood products industry. I look forward to working closely with our members to ensure that their voices are heard throughout the Administration and Congress as we work to grow the market for globally sourced and sustainable wood products."

Prior to joining IWPA, O'Donnell served 10 years on the staff of former U.S. Senator Richard Lugar, a former Chairman of both the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry and the Committee on Foreign Relations. His positions included Deputy Legislative Director and Senior Legislative Assistant while focusing on assisting stakeholders interacting with federal agencies and advancing funding priorities through the budget process.

O'Donnell earned a Bachelor of Science degree in International Economics from Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service.

IWPA was established in 1956, and is the leading international trade association for the North American imported wood products industry, representing 200 companies and trade associations engaged in the import of hardwoods and softwoods from sustainably managed forests. Association members consist of three key groups involved in the import process: U.S. importers and consuming industries, offshore manufacturers and the service providers that facilitate trade.

For more information visit www.iwpawood.org. ■

United States—In a recent press release, the U.S. Census Bureau announced the highest level of U.S. housing starts and building permits since 2008, giving hope that the recent years of a troubled housing market is on a serious road to recovery.

Privately-owned housing starts recently were at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1,072,000. This is 13.2 percent above the revised March estimate of 947,000 and is 26.4 percent above the April 2013 rate of 848,000. Single-family housing starts in April were at a rate of 649,000; this is 0.8 percent above the revised March figure of 644,000. The rate for units in buildings with five units or more was 413,000. ■

New Orleans, Louisiana—The latest guidance related to lumber export policy would be delivered at the upcoming Export Business Training Seminar, to be held here, late June. The Southern Pine Council is hosting this full-day session, organized by Leake and Andersson, LLP in cooperation with Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance, and the New Orleans U.S. Export Assistance Center. It is ideal for hardwood and softwood manufacturers, sales agents, distributors and anyone interested in global lumber markets.

The agenda features a roster of speakers. Dr. Richard Vlosky of the LSU Agricultural Center will open the session with his presentation, "Southern Lumber and Forestry Products: Roles & Opportunities in the Global Market." Edward Hayes of Leake & Andersson, LLP will provide an overview of legal and regulatory issues. Next on the program, Keith Guidroz, president of Gilscot-Guidroz International, will cover export packaging and labeling compliance.

For more information about this event contact Kliener at rkliener@sfpa.org. ■

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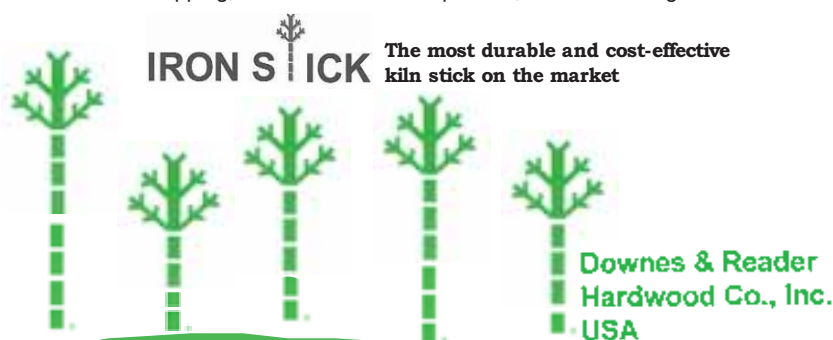
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OBITUARY

Harold Lee White, 85, of Morehead, Kentucky, recently passed away. Born June 22, 1928, on Holly Fork in Rowan County, KY, he was a son of the late Ray Lee and Ethel Mae Hall White. Besides his parents he was preceded in death by two sisters, Rebecca White Carter and Ruth Smith; two brothers, Eugene Fortune White and R. Victor White; one granddaughter, Dixie Ann White; and two great granddaughters, Bonnie Suzanne and Sophia Elizabeth Keating.

White is survived by his wife of 63 years, Barbara Leslie White, five children; 14 grandchildren; four great grandchildren; and a sister, Aileen Moore of Vanceburg, KY.

A graduate of Rowan County High School, White attended Mississippi State University (MSU) and graduated from National Hardwood Lumber Association Inspector Training School in Memphis in 1954. He was a member of First Baptist Church for 58 years where he also served as deacon and Sunday school teacher. In addition to founding Harold White Lumber Company and operating lumber companies for more than half a century, he was actively involved in community and professional organizations. White was a founding member of the Kentucky Forest Industries Association, served on the board of the National Hardwood Lumber Association, was a former board member of Clark County Bank, a Kentucky charter member of the World Trade Center for Economic Development, and a 32nd Degree Mason and Shriner.

His success in business endeavors, as well as his service to others, has been recognized by various organizations. He was selected as the U.S. Small Business Exporter of the Year in the 1980s, the White Conference Room in the Combs Building at MSU was named in his honor by the College of Business, and the U.S. Senate paid tribute to him in the Congressional Record, May 26, 1993, for his work ethic and service to others. ■



Harold L. White

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