

Association (SFPA), which is located in Metairie, LA.

In attendance were 188 companies to exhibit current products. Demand for exhibit space this year required two expansions of the floor plan, creating an Expo that was 45 percent larger than last held in 2013.

Additionally, the event provided multiple product presentation opportunities for several companies, including INNOtech, Autolog, Lucidyne, Halco Software Systems, Telco Sensors and Microtec Springer. Topics covered by these companies included: From Green End to Planer Mill; Safety and Dust Control; CT Log Scanning & Screw Feed Technology; Optimize Your Production Plan; and Light Curtains for the Wood Industry.

SFPA Sawmill Safety Awards were also presented during this year's Expo. These awards honor SFPA lumber manufacturers with outstanding safety records during the previous calendar year. Southern Pine sawmills, all members of SFPA, were recipients of this year's awards.

This Expo is held every two years to provide comprehensive visibility and relationship-building opportunities for the North American wood products industry in 2015. Attendees are given hands-on interaction with state-of-the-art equipment, technologies and services. The Forest Products Machinery & Equipment Expo began in 1950.

For more information, visit online at [www.sfpaexpo.com](http://www.sfpaexpo.com). ■

BUSINESS TRENDS ABROAD

**Myanmar**—Myanmar officials recently reported that mills in the country are experiencing a weaker market. However, with the continually weakening currency, log auction prices in kyat are increasing. Rising material costs are causing some sawmill operations to experience problems running their mills as well as demands for an increase in wages from employees.

Traders of Teak report that market demand in Singapore, Thailand and China has slowed considerably and similar complaints have been heard from those trading with India. Officials stated that demand in India will remain weak for some time as Indian stocks of Teak logs purchased before the log export ban are still substantial.

**Europe**—The European Commission recently published a table with information on the state of implementation of the European Union Timber Regulation (EUTR) by the EU Member States. The table represents whether the member countries have complied with the obligations set forth by the EUTR.

This year significant progress was made by some countries, according to analysts. At press time, the only countries with obligations in a process of fulfillment are Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Spain. All other countries are considered to have fulfilled all their obligations under EUTR.

**Malaysia**—Malaysia and the EU continue their Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) negotiations, and in recent months, the EU Delegation and EU's chief negotiator organized a public consultation with Malaysian stakeholders to share information on the VPA negotiation process.

Stakeholders from the industry, Non-Governmental Organization and indigenous groups received the latest information and discussed a wide range of topics regarding the VPA negotiation process, including:

- The benefits and scope of a VPA
- The role of consultations in negotiating and implementing a VPA
- The roles of Malaysian and voluntary legality licensing and certification schemes
- Complaints procedures once the VPA is implemented
- The treatment of timber from Sarawak under the VPA

The EU expressed optimism that an agreement would be signed with the Federal Government and also informed that negotiations would explore clear and time-bound commitments for Sarawak to develop its timber legality assurance system.

**China**—China is scheduled to phase out commercial logging of natural forests by 2017. An official from the State Forestry Administration (SFA) indicated that China would push forward with its Natural Forest Protection Program. China's commercial logging of natural forests stands at nearly 50 million cubic meters annually. The phase-out program will be carried out in three steps, according to Zhang Jianlong, the deputy head of the SFA, during a press conference.

Last year, a pilot program kicked off that stated all state-owned forest farms and areas will be banned from commercial logging of natural forests by next year, Jianlong explained. He added that a similar ban on

Continued on page 20



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collectively owned forest areas would follow in 2017.

Four million cubic meters of natural forests in Northeast China have survived commercial logging since a ban on key state-owned forest areas took effect.

China currently has 198 million hectares of natural forests, 127 million hectares of which have been put under the administration of reservations since the launch of the Natural Forest Protection Program in 1998.

Jianlong went on to say China has planned 14 million hectares of strategic timber reserves, most of which are located in the south. In five to eight years, he said, they could increase timber supply by 95 million cubic meters, which will help fill the gap after the ban on commercial logging of natural forests.

The country's timber imports currently stand at 20 million cubic meters per year. In spite of the ban, local residents are still allowed to log, but are subject to quotas.

**Japan**—Japanese lumber imports have reached a five-year low at 6.09 million cubic meters, down 17 percent from the same time period last year and the lowest total since 2009.

Volumes declined in double digits from 2007 to 2009. However, this year's drop was the sharpest since imports plummeted 38 percent in 1998, according to published reports.

Consumption diminished as a result of a slower housing market. The weakening Yen against many other foreign currencies further delayed demand.

Wood-based housing starts fell 11 percent year-over-year, slowing demand for lumber. The Japanese government launched its Wood Use Points Program in 2013. It was designed to provide financial incentives for builders to use more domestic species instead of offshore lumber. Some analysts speculated that the program's impact on imports was minimal.

Deliveries from European producers fell 22 percent to 2.4 million cubic meters. Imports from Canada also dropped 16 percent to 2 million cubic meters. Shipments to Japan from the U.S. tumbled 32 percent to 277,050 cubic meters.

**Vietnam**—U.S. hardwood flooring imports from Vietnam recently increased by 30 percent.

China exceeded Malaysia and Indonesia at just under US\$1 million in hardwood flooring shipments. Malaysian imports were worth US\$895,686.

Traditionally Vietnam exports a small amount of flooring to the U.S. market, but shipments of engineered flooring surpassed the US\$1 million mark this year.

About half of all assembled flooring to the U.S. came from China, a year-to-date increase of 44 percent. Indonesia shipped almost US\$800,000 worth of flooring and increased its share in total imports compared to the same time last year.

**Guyana**—Guyana's forestry and wood processing sectors contribute between US\$40 million and US\$60 million to export earnings annually, representing between 3 and 4 percent of gross domestic product.

Average timber and timber products production is estimated at 220,000 cubic meters annually, with furniture manufacturing being a key value-added product.

The forests of Guyana contain a rich variety of timber species and government agencies have been promoting several lesser-used species (LUS) in the domestic and international markets with some success.

LUS marketing campaigns have recently targeted the domestic market. One of these campaigns put furniture made from LUS on trial in cooperation with the National Parks Commission.

Said trial put to test the durability and usefulness of the LUS species being promoted to determine if they are suited for furniture manufacturing.

The Guyana Forestry Commission seems certain that LUS are viable substitutes for better-known species in terms of performance and aesthetics, according to sources.

**Austria**—A turnover of 7.08 billion euros was recently reported from the Austrian wood industry, which registered a decline over the previous year of -5.2 percent. Austria's timber industry is generally a strong foreign trade-oriented industry. Primarily exporting softwood lumber, and wood materials, the export ratio came at just under 68 percent in 2014 to a total of 4.78 billion euros.

Most of the Austrian wood export products were directed to European Union countries, specifically to Germany and Italy. The remaining 25.6 percent were distributed to the other European countries in a share of 13.1 percent; developing countries with 2.8 percent and other countries,

Continued on page 21

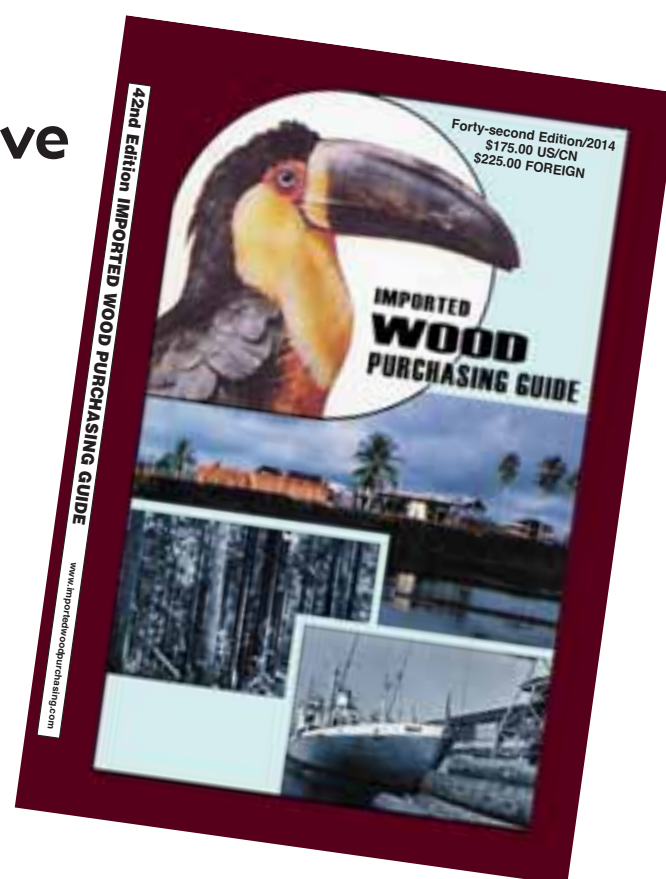
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## BUSINESS TRENDS ABROAD - Continued from page 20

such as the U.S. and Japan at 9.7 percent. Austria's imports of wood products also declined, but to a lesser extent than exports.

Austria's timber industry has 1,369 active companies, of which 950 are classified as sawmills. The diverse economic sector includes the sawmill industry, the construction sector, the furniture industry, and the wood products industry. The majority of the operations of the timber industry are small to medium structured and are almost exclusively privately owned.

In 2014, 26,216 people were employed by Austria's timber industry, of which 779 were apprentices. The decline in the number of employees was due to the ongoing economic downturn with three consecutive years of decreased production.

**Bulgaria**—Bulgaria's log export ban, which entered into force earlier this year remains in place until the adoption of a new Forest Act, Bulgarian media recently reported, quoting government officials.

Bulgaria's Parliament adopted the 3-month suspension on log exports, specifying that changes to the Forest Act were to be drafted during the period. The suspension directly targets the country's problems with illegal logging. It expired recently. However, some amendments still need to be reviewed by the Parliament, and until then, the ban stays in place.

Bulgarian wood industry company representatives expressed opinions that the suspension is pointless, as illegal exports have not stopped, while legal businesses hit by the ban suffer losses and staff cuts. Numerous protests have been held in Bulgaria against the ban, however no action in this respect has been taken.

**West Africa**—In comparison to the rather unexceptional demand over the past few months, lumber producers in West Africa now report that market conditions have changed. Stronger demand for higher end species, for which availability is limited has lifted prices. As a result, there is a downward pressure on prices for other, mainly lower end species, driven by tough competition in the market.

Demand for specialty timbers, such as Ovangkol, has grown and prices

have increased to around euro 100 per cubic meter. Prices for Douka/Makore have also risen in recent weeks. For the mid-priced species there has been no change reported. For the species such as Okoume and Okan that have fallen, mainly because of over stocking in importing countries, buyers are negotiating hard and driving down price levels.

The apparent overstocking of Okoume in China was reported earlier, but now it appears as if stocks held by sawmillers have also increased.

Compared to export volumes in the first quarter of 2014, sawmillers in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, report exports rose in the first quarter of 2015. It is only Ghana that has not enjoyed this growth, according to officials.

**Brazil**—Exports of Brazilian wood-based products increased 12.4 percent in value compared to the same time period in 2014 from US\$220 million to US\$247.3 million.

Pine sawnwood exports grew almost 15 percent in value compared to last year from US\$18.9 million to US\$21.7 million. In terms of volume the increase was just over 14 percent from 82,300 cubic meters to 94,200 cubic meters over the same period.

Tropical sawnwood exports surged around 23 percent in volume, from 28,000 cubic meters last year to 34,400 cubic meters in the same time period this year, which, in terms of value, was from US\$14.5 million to US\$17.9 million.

Due to a weakening in regional and international demand for Brazil's wooden furniture, exports have fallen from US\$38.2 million in 2014 to currently US\$37.1 million this year, a three percent drop.

According to data compiled jointly by the Foreign Trade Secretariat in partnership with the Furniture Industry Association of Rio Grande do Sul and the Innovation Manager Centre, Brazilian furniture exports have been declining since the beginning of the year. ■



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BUSINESS TRENDS CANADA

Ontario

Sawmill operators diligently worked hard during recent months to prevent stain in whitewood logs and green lumber. To avoid the problem, it requires controlling harvest and deliveries of logs, including the sawmill operations, sales and shipments, and processing capabilities. No easy feat, yet it has been done for many, many years! With green lumber markets controlling the volume and timing of receipts, this makes it even more of a challenge. Nonetheless, sawmills conform to these rigid restraints on green lumber purchases. This also helps with the backlog of supplies, especially for Hard Maple. Business was reported as mixed for kiln-dried lumber. Red and White Oak, and Hard Maple, are being affected by lower demand and ample inventory. Business, it was noted, appeared to be stable for lower cost whitewoods used in paint applications, crossties, pallet lumber and cants.

Sawmills were pursuing other species to fill their production schedules in mid-June to avoid sales and price pressures from Hard Maple and Red Oak. Ash was the preferred replacement species during this time. It was noted that Ash demand had tapered off however, even though it has a distinctive market appeal.

Aspen demand continues to be solid after its upturn in business last winter. Sawmillers increased production in response to the demand for both green and kiln-dried stocks; prices are reported as stable.

The demand from moulding, millwork and components manufacturers for Basswood has risen. Inventories were ample to fill the needs required over the summer months. Some contacts said they would have preferred having a more ample supply of this species.

There is steady activity for Birch with production keeping up with demand on all markets.

Contacts comment that it was challenging keeping Hard Maple turned over as green lumber markets had tightened controls on buying to ensure receipts were kept manageable. This was a usual occurrence for this time of year, they added. Business for Soft Maple was good, with prices being stable.

Municipal leaders from across Ontario and Quebec joined forces for a day of action on Parliament Hill recently in Ottawa in support of sustainably managed Boreal Forests in Canada. They were joined in promoting

Canadian sustainable forestry by representatives of the Ontario Forest Industries Association and the Quebec Forest Industry Council.

The provincial associations emphasized how forest product companies in Ontario must abide by strict environmental standards and forest management practices under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act.

They reiterated demands that environmental activist groups must be held accountable for misinformation campaigns that target customers of products from Canada's Boreal Forest. They contend that such campaigns spread false information to discredit forest companies, thereby threatening their viability, the livelihood of forestry workers and the local economies of resource-based communities.

The groups also called on the government to increase efforts to counteract the spread of misinformation and to promote the world-class forest management regime of Ontario and Quebec.

The municipal leaders later presented their case directly to Denis Lebel, Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec. The minister reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to Canada's forest sector.

These groups said they looked forward to working with all orders of government to set the record straight, reach out to customers of forest products sourced from Canada's Boreal Forest, and ensure key customers from around the world continue to source their products from Ontario and Quebec with confidence. ■

Quebec

Sawmill production varied according to regions contacted, although it was noted that production was surpassing demand. It was noted that some sawmills, lumberyards and secondary manufacturers had reached their storage capacity and were struggling to process receipts as they arrived. Handling of green lumber in recent months with the onset of warmer weather was a challenge.

Ash had to compete against other opened grained species, such as Red Oak. With Red Oak prices being reduced in recent months, this caused a price pressure on Ash. Cherry markets had not changed much for quite some time, noted contacts. Demand is low, with sawmillers and loggers controlling its production as much as possible. There was more activity for kiln-dried stocks rather than for green Cherry. Total demand was

Continued on page 25



(From Left) Robert Goodfellow, John Goodfellow, Michael Bernatchez and Bruce Goodfellow

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**BUSINESS TRENDS CANADA-** Continued from page 24

noted as being far from robust. Orders were based on color selections. Demand for Hickory by flooring manufacturers has dropped, therefore lumberyards reduced their purchases of this species. It was noted that international sales were also down for this species. This has resulted in price reductions for this species.

With the trends to painted cabinets in the residential sector, this has affected the demand for this show wood, among other species. Painted finished goods have been the trend for some time, so it has affected millwork and moulding industries. The new home construction market has been slower than expected in the U.S., and therefore has impacted the demand for hardwood industry products and finished goods.

Demand for Soft Maple had been strong over the winter, slowed in early spring and has since picked up. Competition is pressuring prices lower. Contacts recently noted a more stable environment for kiln-dried stocks for this species than for green lumber.

Residential Oak wood flooring production had increased in anticipation of a residential construction rebound, although the housing sector did not reach its full capacity for this year. It was anticipated that it would increase over the summer months and into early fall. With excess inventory, secondary manufacturers are scrambling to reduce this oversupply. Red Oak production was reported as still being high compared to its demand. White Oak quality logs were being diverted to veneer mills.

Production of Poplar has picked up a bit, with exports having increased for this species. This has reduced the supply to domestic markets, noted some contacts. Kiln-dried stocks on domestic markets were steady, however.

Supplies of green and kiln-dried Walnut improved over time noted contacts. Competition for green stock is pushing prices lower for FAS and 1f, and for No. 1 Common and No. 2A in all thicknesses.

According to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) trend measure of housing starts in Canada, the rate was 181,231 units in May compared to 179,524 in April. The trend is a six-month moving average of the monthly seasonally adjusted annual rates (SAAR) of housing starts.

"The small increase in the trend was primarily driven by higher multiple starts in Ontario, the Atlantic region, and Québec. Despite month-to-month variations in multiple starts, CMHC expects builders will continue to focus on managing inventory of completed but unsold units — inventory that is still above historical average," said the CMHC's Chief Economist. "CMHC also forecasts slight moderation in housing starts in 2015 and 2016, reflecting a slowdown in housing market activity in oil-producing provinces that will partly be offset by increased activity in provinces that are seeing the positive impacts of low oil prices."

The stand-alone monthly SAAR was 201,705 units in May, up from 183,329 units in April. The SAAR of urban starts increased by 10.8 percent in May to 185,235 units. Multi-unit urban starts increased by 16.9 percent to 126,367 units in May, while the single-detached urban starts segment essentially held steady at 58,868 units.

In May, the seasonally adjusted annual rate of urban starts increased in Atlantic Canada, Ontario and Québec, while decreasing in BC and the Prairies. Rural starts were estimated at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 16,470 units. ■

**BUSINESS TRENDS U.S.A.**

**Lake States**

Contacts in the Lake States agree that hardwood market activity is fair. A source in Michigan said, "We're dealing with a fair market right now. It's not great but it's not bad."

As for the factors involved, he said, "It seems like for us that millwork shops are busy and flooring manufacturers are slow, so we're getting a balance of business."

He mentioned that White Oak is a faster moving species and Red Oak is slow. "We're getting everything that we need to bring in. Availability hasn't really been a problem so far this year. Log prices are about the same. No. 2 and Better lumber is going up in price right now. It's not really up from six months ago, but if you go back a year, prices are definitely up. It really depends from species to species right now. I don't see prices dropping anytime soon. If anything, we may see them flatten out."

He continued, "Outside of Red Oak, our export markets haven't really changed. The overseas markets have backed off from buying Red Oak."

The hardwood supplier said that transportation is not really an issue for his operation currently. "We have the occasional load that is tough to move, but in general trucking is okay."

Continued on page 26



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## **BUSINESS TRENDS ABROAD** - Continued from page 25

When asked about his customers' markets the contact offered, "It's kind of mixed because all of the millwork manufacturers say that they are busy and the cabinet producers are okay too. Flooring manufacturers are slow right now. I think part of the problem is that they anticipated the first six months of this year to be bigger than it has been."

In Ohio, a source said, "I don't know what's going to happen with this market. I can't imagine it's going to fall anymore. I think Hard Maple is going to go up. It's all species to species, but I would expect things to remain the same overall."

He continued, "It seems like the market is over supplied on almost everything. There is a lot of price pressure. Supply is up and demand is down."

Handling Red Oak, Maple, Ash and Aspen, he said, "It's getting harder to move the Maple and the Red Oak has been terrible. The Aspen and Ash are moving steadily. Our grade inventory is definitely up. We're putting Red Oak on sticks because we can't move it green."

When asked about pricing, he said, "Prices are down right now and I certainly don't think they can go down any further."

As for exports, he said, "We do a little bit of business in Canada. They are still steady but they are beating us up on price."

An Indiana source commented, "Trucking is still a problem. There doesn't seem to be as many truckers as there used to be."

He said his customers are hit and miss. "One week their business is up and the next week it's down. There doesn't seem to be any rhyme or reason to it. It is just a completely demand driven market. Nobody really wants to keep any inventory and it seems like a lot of the inventory is creeping up. It's not a good place to be." ■

## **Northeast**

Hardwood suppliers in the Northeast say business activity is spotty. A contact in New York commented, "It's a deceptively strong and strangely inactive market. China is kind of dead in the water. They only want to buy lumber if you want to give it to them for nothing. I almost don't bother quoting China and I'm not attacking them personally. It's just that they want to buy lumber for \$300 less than what they were willing to pay two months ago. The domestic markets seem to be quiet and they are tired of me pestering them to buy lumber. At the same time we are still shipping a fair amount of lumber. The end users are using lumber and so are the cabinet manufacturers. It's a strange market. We are shipping lumber but I can sit here for an hour and the phone doesn't ring. If I was dating this market I'd be worried about a break up, yet we seem to be having fun together so it's a little contradictory."

In New Jersey, a hardwood supplier offered, "The competition for green lumber is down. We have to fight vendors off and tell them to go away nicely because the customers in our area are not taking as much green lumber as they were. Pricing is down to a certain extent and you can almost dictate what you're able to pay for green lumber."

When asked about individual species movement, he noted, "No. 2 Common Hard Maple is terrible. No. 2 Common Hickory is erratic. I had six loads of Birch in my warehouse two weeks ago and then I had two guys buy every piece of it. It's an odd market. If I was asked this week what was moving slow, three weeks from now that very same species would be gone."

As for availability issues, he said, "There's a shortage of 8/4 Hard Maple. We're limited in the lengths that we can offer as well. I think people cut the logs they wanted to cut and I wonder if people are just driving by all the trees in the woods and not cutting them because they are holding out on pricing."

A source in Connecticut said, "Soft Maple is stable to slightly up, and everything else is either stagnant or slower. I don't really think anything is plummeting, but it is definitely slower."

He continued, "These are traditionally our slower months in the summer anyway. It's easy to over produce lumber in the summer because you turn the kilns so fast. Plus everybody is sort of in panic mode to handle the lumber before it stains."

As for export markets, he commented, "Thirty to 40 percent of our business was coming from China. I'm still cleaning up some old orders but I'm not taking a lot of new orders. They don't seem interested in buying lumber right now. At best, exports are 20 percent of our business right now. Europe isn't really doing anything right now either. Everybody seems to think things will pick up in September and October. I'd like to think so." ■

Continued on page 27



### Southeast

Sources in the Southeast accounted for softer business conditions in recent weeks. "There is activity, but it's just not very robust. It seems like the historical summer slowdown started a bit earlier this year. There is a considerable amount of home building going on in this area. However, there isn't a lot of hardwood going into those projects."

Handling most domestic hardwood lumber species, he said, "Hickory is the one bright spot in our market along with demand for No. 1 and 2 White Oak. Red Oak has slowed down significantly. A lot of the Common grades of Hard Maple have taken a big dip in price. We are not exporters, but from what I hear from those that are exporting, is that the prices may be going down even further."

He continued, "Trucking seems to have eased slightly. I suppose that has to do with a slower demand. In the spring time it seems a little harder to find trucking because the big box stores are moving their pressure-treated building lumber, so that puts more pressure on trucking. But right now trucking is not easy, but much easier to come by than it was a year ago."

He noted his customers are cautious. "There's a competitive attitude out there. They seem to be more encouraged this year, but cautious is still the word of the day. Everybody is ordering just-in-time."

A Kentucky hardwood supplier said, "Business is slowing down right now. Log supply is probably a little better but the markets have tightened up."

Handling Red and White Oak, Cherry and Walnut, he said White Oak is moving the best and Cherry is the slowest species.

"Pricing is about the same across the board," he continued. "Our inventory levels are about equal to where they were at this time last year. I think the market is going to get a little tighter and prices will probably come down some in the fall. Things will smooth out after people get back from vacations."

In North Carolina, a contact said, "Business is about the same from six months ago. It may be trending down a little. The biggest factor right now is overproduction. Demand is staying steady but the industry is overproducing."

When asked what items are moving the best, he replied, "Poplar is moving better than the Oaks right now. Prices are up a little from last year. Our outgoing prices are down. I think, if anything, those prices will continue on a downward swing."

As for what remains in 2015, he said, "I think it's going to be tough sledding. If demand really picks up we may see a change. But I don't see that happening any time soon. If production would fall off and people would pull back a little bit, we may see a slight positive change." ■

### West Coast

Sources on the West Coast report stable hardwood business activity. "The hardwood market is stable but it does feel as if it may be slowing down a little bit," said a contact in California. "I can't be certain of that because our sales for this month are pretty good. In the mid-summer, though, we usually get a slow down and it will pick up in the fall. Most of our markets used to be new construction here in southern California with the wineries and businesses like that. But now what's trending over the last 10 years is home remodels because permits are hard to come by here."

The source said 4/4 Poplar is his best moving item. "Ash and Birch are probably our slowest moving items. Availability is pretty decent. The only difficulty we have is finding those special requests. Overall availability is good."

He continued, "It seems there is enough inventory on the market that it will keep prices down."

As for transportation, he said, "Trucking hasn't been an issue but containers were an issue earlier in the year. Once the port strikes were over that area has improved."

When asked about his customers' markets, he said, "We have some customers that are booked out until the end of the year with orders and some that are working on new jobs hand-to-mouth. Those are the ones that indicate to me we are heading for a slow down. It could be just a seasonal slow down. I think largely the cause of our pick up over the last two years was the pent up demand from the economic downturn."

In Washington, a hardwood supplier commented, "Business is brisk. Building has picked up especially with new home construction."

He said Poplar is his company's fastest moving species. "Paint grade is moving a lot right now, even in the upper end. Walnut has really slowed back down. It's still decent, but from where it was when it was even

Continued on page 28

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## BUSINESS TRENDS U.S.A.- Continued on page 27

harder to get, it has slowed down quite a bit.”

As for other issues, he said, “We’re still dealing with a lot of freight issues out here. The lead times at the mills are no worse, in fact they are somewhat improved. But finding timely freight and good pricing is an ordeal. The cost of transportation is up by at least 50 percent.”

When asked about export markets, he said, “Exports haven’t totally fallen off the map, although it has decreased significantly from last year.”

He continued, “Our customers are staying busy. From what I hear there are a lot of quotes going on and some people have order files that have them tied up for months ahead.”

An Oregon source said his markets are good. “The commercial market is very strong. The kitchen cabinet markets are improving significantly.”

As a full line distributor, he said Alder and Poplar are his best moving species. “Our slowest moving item is probably Cherry. White Oak lumber in general is tight and 4/4 FAS Poplar is tight.”

He said his inventory levels are higher compared to where they were last year. “We are compensating for increased sales so we’re in balance.”

Logistically, he commented, “For customers in Oregon, transportation from east coast operations is very difficult because 40-foot containers are not allowed into the port of Portland any longer.”

Looking ahead, he said, “Most of our customers are very busy and have a three month order file. I think we’re going to continue on the same path and have a good solid market for the remainder of the year.” ■

## NEWSWIRES

**New Orleans, Louisiana**—Robinson Lumber Co. Inc., located here, a leading importer/exporter of hardwood lumber, decking, and flooring in the U.S., recently announced the hiring of Andy Nuffer as the company’s first vice president of sales.

Nuffer will oversee overall sales growth strategy for Robinson Lumber’s expansion. He has over 10 years of experience in the industry and has designed and implemented strategic sales, business development and operation planning throughout the industry.

“Andy joins the Robinson Lumber community at an exciting time, as we have begun to plan for long-term growth and expansion,” stated Garner Robinson, president of Robinson Lumber Co. “Andy has held various leadership roles in our industry, and brings strong knowledge of sales, purchasing and industry expertise to the table. We could not be happier to have Andy join the Robinson Lumber family at this critical period of growth.”

Nuffer joins the Robinson Lumber Co. team after spending the past two years as general manager for Thompson Mahogany Co., one of the nation’s largest direct importers of luxury hardwood lumber and decking. Prior to Thompson Mahogany Co., Nuffer spent six years in sales and operations at Baillie Lumber. He is widely recognized for his sales acumen and knowledge of the industry. Nuffer and his family will relocate to New Orleans later this year.

Robinson Lumber Co. has operated since 1893 and is in its fifth generation of family ownership. The company serves customers in over 62 countries. Robinson Lumber’s experienced team offers institutional product knowledge, innovation, and a sophisticated understanding of global trade.

For more information, visit [www.roblumco.com](http://www.roblumco.com). Nuffer can be reached at his new email address [andy@roblumco.com](mailto:andy@roblumco.com). ■



Andy Nuffer

**Cookeville, Tennessee**—Hermitage Hardwood Lumber Sales Inc., headquartered here, recently announced the addition of Jason Dishman to its staff.

“Jason comes to us with over 20 years experience in the hardwood lumber industry,” said President and Owner Parker Boles. “His experience includes inventory control, operations start up, kiln management, lumberyard management, and he has 16 years of procurement and sales experience in green and kiln-dried lumber.”

Dishman is a graduate of the National Hardwood Lumber Association’s 115th Inspector Training School, located in Memphis, TN. He will be re-

Continued on page 29



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Jason Dishman

sponsible for purchasing green lumber at Hermitage Hardwood. In his spare time he enjoys being on the lake and camping with his family and is also an avid sports fan. Dishman and his wife of 39 years have three children.

Hermitage Hardwood is a member of the American Hardwood Export Council, Hardwood Manufacturers Association, Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers Inc., and National Hardwood Lumber Association.

For more information visit [www.hermitage-hardwood.com](http://www.hermitage-hardwood.com). ■

**Vanderhoof, British Columbia**—The BID Group of Companies recently announced that it has acquired Miller Manufacturing Inc., doing business as A&M Manufacturing Inc. of Washougal, WA, and welcomed Dennis Miller and his team to the BID Group.

“Adding A&M Manufacturing expands our equipment and service product lines, including the new ‘Miller Plane Machine’. This new line of products will further enhance The BID Group’s abilities to offer a complete solution to our highly valued customers,” said Alistair Cook, CEO of The BID Group. “We want to serve our customers throughout the industry with a full range of equipment, installation and after sales service.”

A&M Manufacturing Inc. offers planers; electric feed tables and bridges; hydraulic and electric powered hold down; upgrades from hydraulic drives on planer and feed table to electric drives; new cutter heads; top, bottom and side head, totally enclosed fan cooled motor upgrades; position and tension systems for both infeed and planers; jointers and many other products.

For more information visit [www.ammfginc.com](http://www.ammfginc.com). ■

**Vancouver, British Columbia**—Western Forest Products Inc., headquartered here, recently announced investments of CAD\$30 million in three of its British Columbia sawmills.

Of the CAD\$30 million, CAD\$28 million will be invested in Western Forest Products’ Duke Point sawmill to modernize the sawmill, planer mill and install new autograding technology to improve productivity and reduce production costs.

The company is investing the remaining CAD\$2 million in its Chemainus and Ladysmith sawmills. These investments are part of the company’s CAD\$125-million capital strategic investment program, which Western expects to improve its competitiveness and gain access to new markets.

“Our harvesting strategies, and continued demand for our Western Red Cedar and specialty lumber products, allow us to make the needed strategic capital investment at this time. We recognize we need to continue to invest in our operations to maintain our strong competitive position,” said Chairman of WFP, Lee Doney.

Duke Point is one of seven sawmills that Western Forest Products has on Vancouver Island. The company also has two remanufacturing facilities and is North America’s largest Cedar lumber manufacturer. Western Forest Products’ mills have a combined total production capacity of 1.1 billion board feet annually.

For more information visit [www.westernforest.com](http://www.westernforest.com). ■

**Blainville, Quebec**—Autolog Sawmill Automation Inc., headquartered here, recently introduced and demonstrated new products at the 2015



Autolog Sawmill Automation Inc. At The 2015 SFPMA Forest Products Machinery & Equipment Expo

Continued on page 30

## A.H.E.C. and U.S. Hardwoods Great American Resources



The American Hardwood Export Council - the only major overseas export program for U.S. hardwoods. AHEC services the trade with information and assistance for importers, specifiers and users:

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# NEWSWIRES-

Continued from page 29

33rd Forest Products Machinery & Equipment Expo, sponsored by the Southern Forest Products Association, held in Atlanta, GA.

Products demonstrated included:

- A new high-speed double laser tracheid sensor
- A new high-speed color sensor
- A ProGrader scanner module complete with 3D geometric/2D color vision/tracheid sensors
- A fully operational transverse optimizer with two scanner head configurations (45-degree and 90-degree)
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- Key user interfaces operational in simulation mode for the ProGrader, transverse optimizer and log carriage systems

“In the hardwood sector, every board is unique; loss of data is to be avoided at all costs,” said Yvan Rainville, Autolog’s vice president of sales and marketing. “One of our clients expressed a particular interest regarding critical data redundancy and storage over long periods of time. We created a solution that precisely answered their concern about data reliability and redundancy using available industrial-grade technology, including RAID technology. We are now in a position to offer a reliable tailored solution to address this business concern for all the players in the industry.”

Autolog offers a wide range of products and solutions, from the sawmill to the planer mill, for hardwood and softwood customers, as well as customized control systems.

For more information visit [www.autolog.com](http://www.autolog.com). ■

**United States**—A US\$1.4 million International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) project, recently funded by the Government of Japan, aims to promote socioeconomic development and the sustainable management of African forests by expanding the further processing of tropical timber and increasing the intra-African trade of tropical timber and timber products.

African countries import timber and timber products worth about US\$4 billion annually, less than 10 percent of these products originate within the African continent because of the low capacity of the region’s timber-processing sector and the lack of policies to promote intra-African trade.

Estimated to take one year, the ITTO project will improve the competitiveness of African timber and timber products in domestic, intraregional and global markets by facilitating trade arrangements for the export of timber and timber products in the region; producing draft national strategies for further timber processing in pilot countries and business development plans for pilot enterprises; establishing a pilot market news service; implementing technical training in timber processing in selected enterprises; and providing selected national industrial/trade associations with technical assistance. ■

**Peru**—The Eastern Iron Ltd. news agency recently reported that Peru’s Commission for the Fight Against Illegal Logging is considering installing global positioning system (GPS) devices on river boats in the Amazon as a measure to halt the transport of illegally logged timber. Such devices are already installed on Peruvian fishing boats in the Pacific Ocean to keep them from entering areas where fishing is banned, and the Commission for the Fight Against Illegal Logging is in discussion with the National Forest and Wildlife Service to set rules for the use of GPS devices on river boats. The position of High Commissioner for the Fight Against Illegal Logging was established in September 2014 after four Asheninka leaders were murdered by suspected illegal loggers in the Ucayali region near the border with Brazil. ■



**Indonesia**—Indonesia’s Minister of Industry, Saleh Husin, has given a strong indication that he opposes changing the country’s policy banning log exports because of the adverse affect such a change would have on wood-based industries, especially furniture manufacturers.

According to sources, there had been suggestions that the Ministry of Environment and Forestry was considering allowing the export of logs of specific species because of low domestic prices. Minister Husin said that his ministry fully supports the development of the national furniture industry, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises, which need help

Continued on page 31



## NEWSWIRES Continued from page 30

in remaining competitive in an era of free trade.

The minister indicated that he would coordinate with the Minister of Environment and Forestry on the issue. ■

**United States**—A recent market research report from The Freedonia Group forecasts higher demand for U.S. hardwood flooring due to new construction, renovation and repair of buildings.

Freedonia estimates total hardwood flooring demand in 2019 at USD\$16.7 billion.

According to the report, new residential construction and renovation will account for the largest share of total wood flooring demand. The continuing recovery in the housing market will fuel demand.

Non-residential construction, such as offices and commercial buildings, will also increase. Wood flooring demand for non-residential applications is forecast to grow in the next five years, but at a lesser rate and from a smaller volume than residential flooring.

Wood flooring imports have recovered since the U.S. economic recession. The import value of hardwood flooring and assembled wood flooring panels was US\$168.8 million in 2014, an increase by one-third from 2010.

However, the market share of domestically produced hardwood flooring is expected to increase, as reported by Freedonia. Favorable costs of production in the U.S., including low energy cost, will encourage companies to expand existing plants or open new plants in the U.S. ■

**Finland**—The slowly improving EU economy combined with the upward trend in the global economy will encourage the growth of demand for the Finnish forest sector products, according to the Natural Resources Institute of Finland Luke (NRIF).

NRIF forecasts euro weakening against the U.S. dollar due to the hardening of the American Monetary policy by the U.S. central bank planned for this autumn. Weaker euro is supposed to maintain a good level of consumption and exports of the Finnish forest sector goods.

Earlier this year, the reduced volumes of the Finnish export to Eurozone and Japan were balanced by the growth of exports to China, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. According to estimates, European housing starts are likely to go up towards the end of 2015, while the African and Asian ones will preserve the early 2015 levels—in such a way, the annual exports volume will remain unchanged since 2014.

Finland's construction works are expected to follow the upward trend. Conversely, it will only partially make up for the sawn timber demand weakening due to the general housing starts reduction. Sawn timber production is likely to go down by 1 percent to 10.8 million cubic meters year-over-year.

Unfavorable figures in the beginning of the year may lead to reduced harvesting volumes to 54.9 million cubic meters. Timber prices, which went down earlier in 2015, will return to the level of 2014 due to the growth of demand for wood. ■

**West Africa**—Sawnwood and log prices are unchanged in West Africa, according to sources. Sawmills in the region report cutting back production or temporarily ceasing operations in an effort to match output with current levels of demand.

Officials commented that markets generally appear to have entered a quieter period and there are no signs of any substantial change in consumption of tropical hardwoods in Europe.

China's importers are adjusting purchases in anticipation of a further weakening of demand as economic growth in the country slows. Log stocks in China are said to still be well above demand levels, especially for Okoume and Okan.

West African producers do not expect any marked change in demand during these quieter conditions and are managing output levels to sustain current prices. ■

**Hannover, Germany**—Brunner-Hildebrand, headquartered here, recently announced the addition of its energy-saving system Hildebrand Turbo Technology (HTT). Based on height-adjustable aluminum baffles, which are installed at the rear of the dry kiln, operating vertically in between specially profiled aluminum load stops, the computer control system positions these baffles to the lumber load according to the constantly updated drying data. Company Sales Manager Theo Leonov commented, "The positioning of the baffles is based on wood moisture content, and also on time allowing all lumber stacks to be exposed to periods of high air flow with a period of very low or no air flow.

"We are bringing the wood evaporation zone closer to the surface and promoting moisture evaporation. We allow the wood to relax the drying

Continued on page 32

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Bill Reese standing by prime Cherry veneer logs

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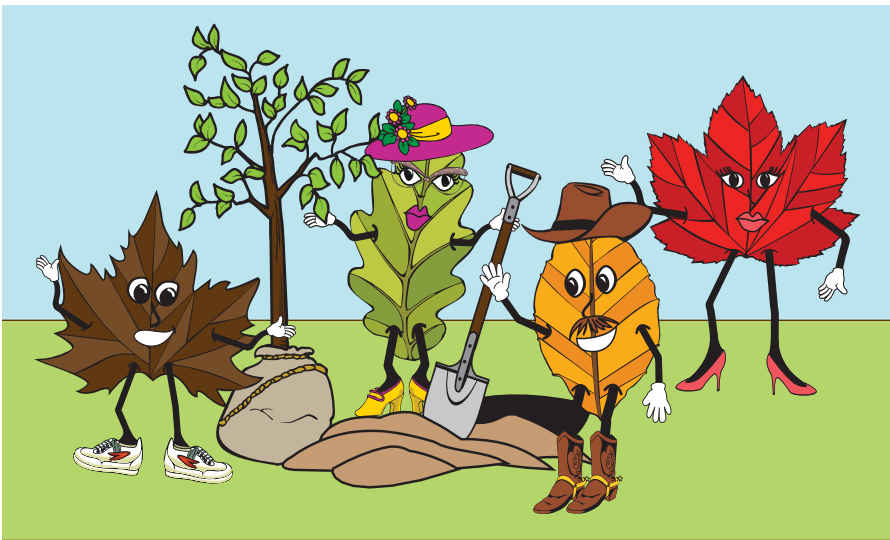
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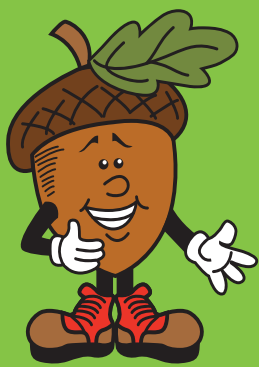
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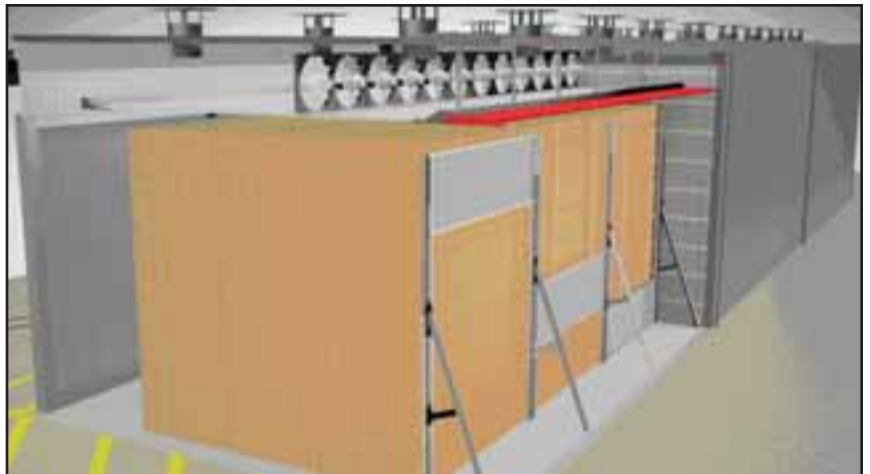
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## NEWSWIRES – Continued from page 31

gradient and continue the drying process while keeping the drying stresses to a minimum and improving grade."

Leonov said the wood science behind the system is in its conventional drying. "In conventional drying, heat is constantly higher on the wood



Brunner-Hildebrand Turbo Technology HTT®

surface, keeping the temperature driving force reversed. The vaporization process is still proceeding at the wood's surface, but now the heat comes from the wood. We get a temperature gradient in the wood where

Continued on page 33

## IMPORT/EXPORT CALENDAR

### August

**Tecno Mueble International, Furniture Show**, Guadalajara, Mexico. Contact: [tecnomueble@afamjal.com.mx](mailto:tecnomueble@afamjal.com.mx). Aug. 19-22.

### September

**FMC China 2015, Furniture Manufacturing & Supply China**, Pudong, Shanghai. Contact: [martin.du@ubmsino-expo.com](mailto:martin.du@ubmsino-expo.com). Sept. 9-12.

**Global Buyers Mission**, Whistler Conference Center, Whistler, BC. Contact: [gbm@bcwood.com](mailto:gbm@bcwood.com). Sept. 10-12.

### October

**National Hardwood Lumber Association, 2015 Annual Convention & Exhibit Showcase**, Omni Hotel Downtown, Nashville, TN. Contact: 901-399-7560. Oct. 7-9.

**APA-The Engineered Wood Association, Annual Meeting and Info Fair**, Coeur d'Alene Golf Spa & Resort, Coeur d'Alene, ID. Contact: [mlilley@engineeredwood.org](mailto:mlilley@engineeredwood.org). Oct. 17-19.

### November

**North American Wholesale Lumber Association, Traders Market**, Hilton Anatole, Dallas, TX. For more information: [www.nawla.org](http://www.nawla.org). Nov. 4-6. ■



## NEWSWIRES — Continued from page 32

the surface is cooler than the core. It creates a vapor pressure differential, which is a product of temperature and moisture content that drives the moisture from the core to the surface.”

Lumber drying benefits with HTT include:

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**Canada**—Recent Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade negotiations brought a clash between Japan and Canada over log export protection. According to sources, British Columbia (BC) may now be under increased pressure.

Canadian media reported Canada is also pushing for tariff reduction in other forestry markets. Japan is also targeting Canada for removal of export curbs on its British Columbia logs as a matter of reciprocity.

Other reports stated Japan is pressing Canada to eliminate or modify curbs it has imposed on BC log exports, which are driving up their cost for foreign buyers. Details of the forestry impasse with Japan are contained in documents from Canada's Foreign Affairs department that are marked “secret” and have been obtained by The Canadian Press.

“Canada is pursuing full tariff elimination for the forestry sector—as you know, tariffs in Malaysia are as high as 40 percent, as high as 31 percent in Vietnam and as high as 10 percent in Japan,” states a briefing note prepared for senior federal trade officers in Ottawa and their provincial counterparts in BC.

The memo also states discussions with Malaysia and Vietnam are progressing well. The same was not said for Japan, Canada's biggest Asian trading partner. “Discussions with Japan are ongoing yet have been difficult. Japan has very clearly linked the elimination of forestry tariffs to BC, eliminating or modifying log export controls,” the memo stated.

A small percentage of BC logs are exported to foreign markets, in addition to Japan, yet must satisfy some strict provincial and federal necessities.

“There have been some suggestions from your authorities in that Canada adjusts for no tariff reductions from Japan on forestry products in order to protect our log export control regime,” as stated in the memo.

“This is not an acceptable outcome for Canada; it would put our competitors at a permanent advantage in the Japanese market for one of our primary exports.”

In addition to Canada, the 12 countries within the TPP include Australia, Bunei, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the U.S. and Vietnam. ■

## OBITUARY

**Alan Lee Kitchens**, 64, recently passed away. Kitchens was vice president of Kitchens Brothers Manufacturing Company, located in Hazlehurst, MS. He was formerly on the board of directors of the Hardwood Manufacturers Association, the National Hardwood Lumber Association board of directors, and the Southwestern Hardwood Manufacturers Club. He was a long-time member of the Utica Christian Church and was a Sunday school teacher and board member.

Kitchens was a member of Mississippi Skeet Shooting Association, an avid pilot, and sportsman. He was a graduate of Utica High School, Utica, MS, and The University of Southern Mississippi at Hattiesburg where he was a member of the Sigma Nu Fraternity.

He was preceded in death by daughter, Stacey Kitchens, brother, Greg Kitchens, and his parents, Mid and Sybil Kitchens.

He is survived by his wife, Paula Kitchens; daughter, Amy Kitchens of Brandon, MS; brother, Kevin Mid Kitchens of Rayville, LA; and grandson, Patrick Myers Whittington.

Memorials may be made to Utica Christian Church, P. O. Box 306, Utica, MS, 39175 or Utica Cemetery Association, P. O. Box 129, Utica, MS, 39175. ■



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INDEX OF ADVERTISERS	
AHEC (Amer. Hardwood Export Council). .29	McIlvain, Alan, Co. . . . .3
Allegheny Wood Products . . . . .8	Midwest Walnut Co. . . . .3
Argo Fine Imports . . . . .27	Neff Lumber Mills, Inc. . . . .11
Atlanta Hardwood Corp. . . . .10	Newman Lumber Co. . . . .11
BAILLIE Lumber Co. . . . .17	Northwest Hardwoods . . . . .
Bingaman & Son Lumber, Inc. . . . .28	Penn-Sylvan International, Inc. . . .31
Bradford Forest . . . . .36	Ram Forest Products, Inc. . . . .33
Business Oregon . . . . .6	Rolling Ridge Woods, LTD. . . . .
China F. P. Fair . . . . .	Romea Legnami, s.P.a. . . . .9
Cole Hardwood, Inc. . . . .4	SFPA . . . . .7
Downes & Reader Hardwood Co., Inc. .30	Salamanca Lumber Co., Inc. . . . .
G.H. Evarts & Co., Inc. . . . .25	Savage Lumber Co., Inc. . . . .29
Goodfellow Inc. . . . .13	Simon Lussier Ltee . . . . .19
Hancock Lumber Co. . . . .5	Somerset Wood Products . . . . .
Hardwood Forestry Fund . . . . .32	Thompson Hardwoods, Inc. . . . .33
Hardwoods Import Lumber Division . .	TMX Shipping Company, Inc . . . . .21
Hermitage Hardwood Lumber Sales Inc. 16	Transit King City/Northway Forwarding Ltd. 23
Idaho Forest Group . . . . .	Treat Hardwood Lumber . . . . .27
Independence Lumber, Inc. . . . .	Tuscarora Hardwoods, Inc. . . . .30
IWPA (Int'l. Wood Products Assoc.) .28	U•C Coatings . . . . .34
J.W. Goodfellow For. Prdts. Inc. . . .24	Wheeland Lumber Co.,Inc. . . . .31
Kretz Lumber Co., Inc. . . . .22	Yoder Lumber Co., Inc. . . . .
Lawrence Lumber Co. Inc. . . . .18	

**Note: Advertisers with no page number carry an alternating Ad schedule.**



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