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AHMI Staff Susan Koontz and Tom Inman give Mark Barford a plaque at farewell dinner honoring his time with AHMI

Inman Named AHMI President; Barford Leaves For NHLA

HIGH POINT, NC – Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc. (AHMI) is pleased to announce the promotion of Tom Inman to the office of president.

Inman has served the association and its members since 1994 as director of communications. He has administered AHMI promotion and education programs including its current Oak Promotion, The Height of Beauty and Appalachian Standard campaigns, the Appalachian FAS Promotion and the Community Involvement Program.

“We are very excited to have an outstanding
(See AHMI on page 2)

Industry Issues, Tours Lead To Successful AHMI Meeting

STAUNTON, VA - The opportunity to dialogue about industry issues and tour hardwood manufacturing facilities contributed to a very successful 2006 Inter-Industry Meeting for Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc. (AHMI)

The annual session is a chance for wood producers to sit down with wood consumers and discuss issues. In 2005, AHMI introduced a roundtable format to bring together the suppliers and end users and found the meeting to be very popular.

For 2006, AHMI continued the program and added plant tours of a cabinet production facility and a hardwood dimension operation. The repeat and additions were a hit with the participants at the Oct. 11, 2006 meeting, report Tom Inman, AHMI president.

“It was amazing the common themes we heard from each table when they gave reports from the discussions,” he said. “We all recognize the key issues in the industry right now, but we also heard several specific issues members had, and then forecasts of where markets are headed from others.”

Meeting attendees were divided into tables of eight with producers and distributors evenly grouped with hardwood consumers. The consumer companies represented flooring, millwork, cabinets and dimension.

Each table was given 15 minutes to discuss log supply, species availability and demand, transportation and a forecast for the next 30-180 days. The
(See Issues on page 3)

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APPALACHIAN Future Meetings

2007 Annual Meeting - Feb. 22-25

Long Boat Key Resort, Long Boat Key, FL

2007 Summer Family Conference July 22-24

The Greenbrier, White Sulphur Springs, WV

2007 Inter-Industry Meeting - Oct. 16-17

Location to be

Mark my final words

By Mark A. Barford, CAE, CF

It is with a combination of excitement and sadness that I choose to leave Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc. after nearly 14 years. I leave effective the first of November to accept the position of Executive Director of the National Hardwood Lumber Association based in Memphis, TN.

I thank the members of AHMI for their fantastic personal and professional support during my tenure, and promise that my service to you does not end. I have always considered myself to be working first for the hardwood lumber industry. My skills and experience lead me to association work, which I have been in since 1980, and the NHLA offers me the opportunity to use those skills on the national level on behalf of the industry.

I leave AHMI with a strong membership, great volunteer leadership, and a very special individual to take over the reigns of president, Tom Inman. Tom and I have worked together for over 12 years, and I know he has many talents to offer that will become even more evident in his new role. Best of luck to you Tom, and I am always just a phone call, fax or email away from assisting.

I also want to thank Susan Koontz for her valuable assistance in the AHMI office and her efforts to serve this industry.

The leadership of AHMI, particularly Chairman John Crites, could not have made this transition any smoother. The quick transition is preferable to all parties involved, and everyone has been gracious in making this happen. I owe a special thanks to the Officers and Board of AHMI.

Finally, you have not seen the last of me yet. AHMI has invited me to attend the 2007 Annual Convention at Long Boat Key Club in February to speak on future cooperation between these two great associations on behalf of the industry.

In case you don't get there, let me tell you what I am going to say... Yes, there will be great cooperation and collaboration as both Tom and I are committed to serving the greatest industry on earth – the hardwood lumber business!

For those wishing to stay in contact with me, my personal email address is markbarford@triad.rr.com. The number at NHLA is 901/377- 1818.

All the best to my Appalachian friends and family. I look forward to continuing to serve you, and sharing a toast at the next convention!



MEMBERSHIP

HIGH POINT - Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc. welcomes the following new members to the association:

Supplier

Mountain Environmental Services, Inc.
Max Kimel
1560 Pisgah Dr.
Canton, NC 28716

AHMI from page 1

candidate already on staff to step up and take over the management of AHMI," said AHMI Chairman of the Board John Crites, Sr. "Tom has been a leader in the mission of the association which is the promotion of Appalachian lumber and products around the world, along with the education of wood consumers and the public about our truly sustainable hardwood resource.

"The Executive Committee and Board know these programs will only continue to improve and we believe Tom will take the association to the next level," he said.

The announcement follows the resignation of Mark Barford who recently accepted the position of executive manager of the National Hardwood Lumber Association. Barford had served as AHMI's executive vice president and president since 1992. He will begin with NHLA in November.

"Mark has served AHMI extremely well overseeing the growth of the association both in membership and programs," said Crites. "We look forward to continuing to work with Mark, now at the national level."

Inman is a native of Stuart, VA, and graduate of the University of Richmond, Richmond, VA. He and his wife, Rosemary, have two sons and live in High Point, NC. He is a Baptist deacon, served as a leader in the Boy Scouts and owns TRI Publishing Inc.

Inman previously worked in broadcasting and print media for 12 years before joining the association.

"I am honored to be given this opportunity to continue to serve the membership of AHMI," Inman said. "These are truly the finest people I have ever worked with and I am excited about meeting the challenges of the future."

Inman began his new responsibilities in mid-October. For more information, please contact him at (336) 885-8315 or e mail tom@appalachianwood.org.

Issues from page 1

answers were as follows:

Log supply – The majority of participants reported log decks were very low at most sawmills. A decline in loggers and decrease in value for oak timber were the top reasons with weather and cash flow contributing. One group added that landowners are beginning to take timber off the market as prices fall.

Species availability – Participants agreed there is plenty of Red Oak available while White Oak supplies are limited. Markets for Cherry, Walnut and Soft Maple are strong while Hard Maple, Basswood and Birch are declining. Poplar availability and markets were stable or increasing, most said.

Transportation – Each group agreed that fuel costs continue to drive transportation issues and companies were seeking additional back-hauls to offset costs. Many companies were negotiating fuel surcharges to recoup costs. Others reported that the availability of drivers was low.

Forecast – The responses were mixed in forecasting the next month to six months. A few groups said market conditions will improve while an equal number predicted declines. Another portion guessed that the market will stay about the same with companies able to move product with low margins of profit. A slow down in the housing construction and sales industries are expected to slow hardwood sales to flooring, cabinet and millwork companies.

“Overall the mood was concern for the short term and improvements expected over the next six months,” Inman said. “Our participants were very pleased to learn that others were going through many of the same hardships and offered suggestions on ways to work through it.”

The evening session was highlighted by a presentation from Connie Edwards, lead designer for American Woodmark cabinets in Winchester, VA. She presented research American Woodmark has completed that projects cabinet sales to continue to rise.

“Cabinetry is truly a fashion business today with furniture-like details, varied depths of wall and base cabinets, varied heights and a mixture of styles and designs,” she said. “There are so many choices and people want something different than their neighbor.”

Edwards offered details of the dramatic growth in the cabinet industry in the past five years as new home construction and remodeling has exploded. The speculation is that these markets are cooling, she said, but that is from all-time highs.

“Building had been at an unsustainable rate and now they are realizing it and seeing a decline,”



From left are AHMI Chairman John Crites, American Woodmark's Connie Edwards and Chris Ghiloni

Edwards said. “But the numbers are still very good.”

She reported that Maple cabinet sales continue to lead the species list for American Woodmark. Consumers continue to seek closed grain woods but are becoming more receptive to new colors, stains and styling that may broaden the mix of species.

American Woodmark has increased its production of maple cabinets and reduced lines offered in oak. The next year will likely see more stills in bur-nished wood, quartersawn and darker finishes.

The next morning about half of the attendees and others toured the American Woodmark Hardy County, WV, plant near Moorefield, WV. The facility produces cabinet doors and frames in Maple and Oak.

Participants saw the extensive inventory of parts and how American Woodmark is able to build its products from that inventory and then ship to other plants for final assembly.

The group also toured the Allegheny Dimension plant in Petersburg, WV. The facility produces dimension parts for private industry and the government. Participants were able to see Red Oak being produced for dormitory bedroom furniture. Allegheny Dimension hosted the group for lunch.

“This was an outstanding meeting that offered a lot of different things for our members and guests,” Inman said. “All encouraged us to maintain this format and we likely will in 2007.”

The next meeting of AHMI will be the 2007 Annual Meeting at the Long Boat Key Club near Sarasota, FL. Meeting information will be available soon on the association's website at www.appalachianwood.org.

For more information, please contact Inman at (336) 885-8315 or email tom@appalachianwood.org.

Darker Finishes, Exotics On Rise At Market

HIGH POINT - Furniture manufacturers increased the volume of darker finishes and the rise of exotic species of woods continued at the recent Fall 2006 International Home Furnishings Market in High Point.

The event draws more than 1,600 furniture manufacturers and thousands of retail buyers and designers to the latest introductions in home furnishings. The market changed its format for the fall with opening day on Monday and closing on Saturday.

Many exhibitors said attendance was down slightly but interest remained keen in new product, reports AHMI President Tom Inman. He attends the market each spring and fall to survey manufacturers about trends.

"Attendance has been stable or in slight decline for the past several markets," Inman said. "The opening of Las Vegas, increased use of the Internet, the cost of travel all have had an impact."

Trends from the Fall of 2006 are an increase in darker finishes and more elaborate detail for bedroom and dining room pieces. Ornate carvings with extensive glazes were evident in many showrooms.

The increase in exotic species of wood also continues and was discovered during the annual Wood Species and Furniture Design Survey administered by AHMI at market.

"One of the manufacturers reported to us that the wood was a 'tropical hardwood' and we asked which one and he said they did not specify that," Inman said. "We were surprised to learn they leave it up to the foreign manufacturer.

"That gives us valuable insight into new markets we need to reach with our message about Appalachian hardwoods," he said.

AHMI Sponsors Furniture Design Award

HIGH POINT - Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc. presented the 2006 Pinnacle Award for Juvenile Furniture to a three-person design team.

The award was given recently at the American Society of Furniture Designers annual program during the Fall 2006 International Home Furnishings Market. The team of John Conrad, ASFD, Anne Russell, ASFD, and Sean Slack, ASFD, won the award for the group Z Bedroom for Powell Company.

The judges commented that the group was edgy, contemporary design; multifunctional pieces; sophisticated enough to grow with the child.

"AHMI is very pleased to sponsor this program and honor furniture designers for their work," said AHMI



The Furniture market species survey team included High Point University students (front row, from left) Jenny Evans, Emily Moreton, and Jennifer Eller; (back row) Mark Barford, HPU Professor Stephen Huff and Tom Inman

Results of the species and design survey will be reported in November.

Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc. members Hooker Furniture and Kincaid Furniture both offered new pieces with strong American styling and from American species Oak and Ash. Stanley Furniture expanded its collection in Cherry and Wormy Maple while other companies boosted offerings in mission styles in Oak. Broyhill Furniture expanded its Attic Heirlooms collection in Oak. Bernhardt Furniture's new pieces were produced in Cherry and Walnut mixed with iron, stone and woven materials.

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

President Tom Inman. "We have sponsored the juvenile category for six years and this has been very successful for us to keep the name Appalachian Hardwoods before the people who are initiating the trends in furniture design."

The 11th annual Pinnacle Awards program of the American Society of Furniture Designers honored the latest designs in 15 categories including furniture, accessories and lighting. With special tribute to ASFD's 25th anniversary, an "Outstanding Member Award" presentation was made honoring Arto O. Szabo (Arto Szabo Associates, Greenwich, CT) for innumerable past and current contributions and leadership to the organization since its inception in 1981.

Inter-Industry Roundtables



Above are photos of discussions during the AHMI Inter-Industry Roundtable session in October. More than 80 people shared in the dialogue on log supply, species availability and demand, transportation and a forecast for the next 30-180 days. See story on page 1.



On Tour

Left Photo - Bob Chehi (3rd from left) of Allegheny Dimension, Petersburg, WV, begins plant tour during the 2006 AHMI Inter-Industry meeting. Approximately 50 people toured the plant and an American Woodmark Cabinet facility in Moorefield, WV.



Tour participants watch as panels are sanded at the Allegheny Dimension plant. See story page 1

Furniture Companies Hope 'Certified' Sells

Reprinted from Furniture Today

There's not yet much consumer demand for furniture containing wood certified as coming from sustainable sources, but manufacturers who have taken the certification step are still glad they did.

"Reaction in the marketplace so far has been an overwhelming yawn," said Greg Harden, president of Harden Furniture, which certified under the Sustainable Forest Initiative two years ago. "We get more appreciation on the contract side, where there are institutions that have environmental requirements."

Still, Harden Furniture believes certification can be a good merchandising point; one of its brochures bears the title "Planning for Future Generations."

Copeland's new Wave bedroom is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. President Tim Copeland also believes sustainable woods are low on the consuming public's radar screen right now.

"We don't think in and of itself FSC certification will make the sale," he said. "But we see over the long haul an increasing interest in conservation, even if at this point it's maybe spurred by self-interest."

Copeland thinks certification could give a competitive edge down the road. "An FSC label won't overcome poor product, poor quality, bad design or bad service," he said.

Barford Visits Asia For AHEC Oak Work

In early October, Mark Barford traveled to both Hong Kong and Vietnam in cooperation with the American Hardwood Export Council to promote American hardwoods and specifically American Oak.

The trip included two "Introduction of American Hardwood Lumber Grading" seminars and participation in a furniture design contest and trade show in Vietnam. The furniture design contest was organized to allow the Vietnamese designer to use whatever materials they decided to use. More than 100 designs were entered with 24 selected as finalists.

The New Oak Partnership contributed a container load of American Red Oak for their use to encourage them to consider the special qualities of Oak.

"The Oak lumber provided by the New Oak Partnership was a tremendous success with 16 of the finalists using Red Oak in their designs," Barford reported. "Both the first and third place winners had utilized Red Oak in beautiful and unique ways."

Barford reported that the seminars were well attended, and many questions about how the NHLA hardwood lumber grading system serves buyers throughout the world.

"These seminars are set-up to provide a brief overview of the history of lumber grades and how they are used," he said. "As competition increases from other lumber sources throughout the world, the grades provide an important distinction for American lumber."

AHMI Thanks Inter-Industry Consumer Sponsors

Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc. thanks the following companies for sponsoring consumers to attend the 2006 Inter-Industry Meeting in Staunton, VA:

Church & Church Lumber, Millers Creek, NC
Robert S. Coleman Lumber, Culpeper, VA
W.M. Cramer Lumber Co., Hickory, NC
East Ohio Lumber Co., Salineville, OH
Jim C. Hamer Co., Kenova, WV
Keiver-Willard Lumber Co., Newburyport, MA
Powell Industries, Waynesville, NC
Sisler Lumber Co., New Creek, WV
Taylor-Ramsey Corp., Lynchburg, VA
Wagner Lumber Co., Owego, NY
Walker Lumber Co., Woodland, PA
Wayne Lumber Co., Monticello, KY

For the past several years, AHMI has offered a sponsorship program and attracted lumber buyers as guests of member companies. In 2006, 14 lumber buyers participated in the event.



Wellborn Cabinet Appreciation

AHMI Board Member Jerry Vaughn of Emmet Vaughn Lumber (from left), John Wellborn of Wellborn Cabinets and AHMI President Tom Inman stop during a plant tour at Wellborn's Ashland, AL, facility during Wellborn's Hardwood Lumber Appreciation Day recently. The cabinet maker invited suppliers for a tour, meeting and sporting events. Inman assisted with the company's program on forest certification issues facing the hardwood lumber industry. More than 75 people participated in the two-day meeting.

Timber Sale, Estate Seminar

A program on federal taxes on the sale of timber and estate planning for private forest landowners will be held Dec. 9 at the Days Inn Conference Center, Flatwoods, WV.

By understanding basic timber tax laws and by properly planning a timber sale, tax liability on timber income can be limited. The recent tax law changes related to taxation of capital gain property are especially significant. Proper planning is critical to minimizing one's tax liability from timber sales.

Anyone who owns property needs an estate plan. An estate plan allows you to direct how, and to whom, your assets will be distributed after your death. It is important for landowners to realize that every estate is planned - if not by the landowner, then by the state and federal laws. Landowners often postpone planning for the distribution of assets following their deaths because of the difficult emotions involved. However, if an estate plan does not exist, property could be distributed according to your state's intestacy laws.

For more information, please contact the West Virginia Forestry Association, P.O. Box 718, Ripley, WV 25271 or telephone 888-372-WOOD (9663). Email to wvfa@wvadventures.net.



Oak Drying Workshop Set

BLACKSBURG, VA - The operation of a dry kiln facility, especially one drying oak, requires special skills and the Department of Wood Science and Forest Products at Virginia Tech will conduct its 23rd Annual Oak Drying Workshop on Dec. 6-8 at the Skelton Conference Center on campus.

The program is designed for new and beginning dry kiln and pre-dryer operators and supervisors may also benefit. The program assumes no experience in lumber drying.

Topics will include the basics of lumber drying, air drying, lumber handling, predryer and kiln operation, schedules, conditioning, quality control procedures, introduction to steam systems, steam trap operation and maintenance, and kiln maintenance procedures.

For additional information or registration, visit online www.cpe.vt.edu/oakdrying or contact Brian Bond, Brooks Center, Virginia Tech, 1650 Ramble Rd., Blacksburg, VA 24061 or (540) 231-8752.

AHMI Prepares For 2007 Annual Meeting

Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc. is preparing for what promises to be an informative and exciting weekend for the 2007 Annual Convention.

The association will visit the Longboat Key Club in Longboat Key, Florida, near Sarasota in 2007. The meeting dates are Feb. 22-25.

The resort offers classically appointed rooms and suites with a large private balcony with views of the beach, lagoon or golf course. There are guest rooms, suites and one or two-bedroom condominiums available for AHMI meeting attendees.

"This property gives a host of choices for first-class accommodations for our convention," said AHMI President Tom Inman. "They assure us that by meeting at Longboat Key Club and Resort, we can expect an experience that will inspire confidence, generate excitement and produce long-lasting results."

AHMI's convention program includes National Hardwood Lumber Association Executive Manager and former AHMI president Mark Barford who will detail his plans for NHLA. He will be joined by NHLA President Jim Howard in offering insight into the future of the national organization.

Other business session speakers include an update on The New Oak Partnership, a report from the American Hardwood Export Council on interna-



Longboat Key Club near Sarasota, FL

tional markets for certified wood and other hardwood lumber business issues.

An invitation along with registration materials will be sent out in the next few weeks to members who will get first chance at the accommodations. Please view more information about Longboat Key Club at www.longboatkeyclub.com or contact the AHMI office at (336) 885-8315.



FORESTRY

Enviros Sue Over Changes

SAN FRANCISCO — Environmentalists asked a federal judge recently to overturn the Bush administration's rules for managing the country's 155 national forests.

Issued in December 2004, the rules gave regional forest managers more discretion to approve logging, drilling and other projects without lengthy environmental studies.

Lawyers for the environmentalists told a U.S. District Court Judge that the rules do not include the safeguards for endangered wildlife and forests that federal law requires. The rules allowed forest management plans to be revised without environmental studies and repealed a requirement for forests to maintain "viable" populations of native wildlife.

The environmental groups include Defenders of Wildlife, Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society and Vermont Natural Resources Council.

Forest Service Plans Certification Audit

WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. Forest Service plans to audit the Allegheny National Forest in Pennsylvania to determine if timber harvesting is meeting the standards of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative and the Forest Stewardship Council.

The Forest Service said it is following a global trend to have third parties declare forest management as sustainable and needs the public's confidence as it faces new challenges. The audit may also be expanded to forests in Oregon, Wyoming, Wisconsin and Florida.

The sustainability standards address issues such as making sure new trees are growing to replace those that are cut, controlling erosion and protecting fish and wildlife habitat and clean water. Millions of acres of state and industrial forest lands around the country have already undergone the process with SFI taking the lead.