

Governor's Conference for Louisiana's Forest Products and Furnishings Industries

State forces have joined together with the Louisiana Forest Products Laboratory and the Louisiana Furnishings Industry Association to provide a day of information, networking and contacts to help you in Louisiana's wood industry enhance your business. The meeting will be held in the Brumfield-Caffey Annex on the LSU Alexandria campus.

The day—September 18—will start at 9:00 am with presentations and discussions on where you can go to get various types of financial assistance. These will include both government and private sources as well as loan guarantee programs.

Presentations will be made by Brett Crawford and Mike Williams with the Louisiana Economic Development Corporation and Rebecca Rohrbough with First National

Bank of Commerce. In addition, Mike Womack with Custom Cutters, Inc. will present what he had to go through to obtain a loan guarantee.

In conjunction with this financial theme, Secretary of Economic Development Kevin Reilly will give a luncheon presentation on how the Department of Economic Development is working with our industry. He is expected to discuss the increase in opportunities for forest products businesses in Louisiana.

Following this financial information, presentations on how to better understand air and water regulations and how they directly affect our industry will be provided. This is prior to a live national teleconference on Clean Air Compliance for Wood Furniture Manufacturing Operations from

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Jack Siekkinen, Executive Director of the Louisiana Furnishings Industry Association, shows off some of the display items at the LFIA Furniture Gallery located in Ponchatoula, LA.

A Perfect Partnership

That's how Jack Siekkinen, Executive Director of the Louisiana Furnishings Industry Association (LFIA), describes the working relationship that exists between the Louisiana Forest Products Laboratory and his association. "Our respective organizations share a common goal in our mutual efforts to advance the states's forest products industries. We often find ourselves taking different, but complementary, approaches toward our economic development objectives."

The LFIA is constantly seeking to add new benefits for its furniture and furnishings producing members. "We will look across our statewide membership to identify common needs.

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the University of Tennessee, which will be downlinked to the Conference so you can participate.

These presentations will be made on available sources of information to better help you understand these regulations and where you can receive help to comply, if needed. They will be provided by Dick Lehr with the Department of Environmental Quality and Harry Freeman with the University of New Orleans, Louisiana Technical Assistance Program (LaTAP). LaTAP provides free non-regulatory pollution prevention technical assistance to small businesses. In addition, a testimonial by John Starling on how the Department of Environmental Quality specifically helped Starling, Inc. will be presented.

A real highlight of the day will be the Buyer/Supplier Expo. This afternoon event sponsored by the Department of Economic Development will bring various sectors of the industry together to help everyone develop better contacts with sources of quality raw materials and industrial markets for products. The amount of unprocessed logs and lumber leaving the state and dried lumber returning is of major concern. This dried lumber is purchased at higher prices by our secondary processing industry.

If better contacts could be made between dried lumber producers and the smaller secondary processing industry, benefits could be gained for both. The Expo, therefore, will be a chance for connections to be made by producers of dried lumber who are willing to sell smaller quantities to cabinet, millwork and furniture producers.

In addition, the Expo will also provide opportunities to connect small and medium sized companies with equipment, hardware, finishes and financial and insurance

sources, among others. These contacts will be made available through booths provided for these suppliers and buyers by the Department of Economic Development, so they can be easily located.

Also, to be sure to accommodate as many companies as possible, a forum following the teleconference will allow people to express their thoughts and/or needs. This will help increase the opportunity for connecting with others to fulfill that need or to let the organizations involved know what might be done to facilitate the enhancement of the industry in this state.

The afternoon sessions will overlap so that everyone may participate as much or as little in any session you wish without missing any opportunity to network. The teleconference will be from 1:00 to 3:00 pm with the Buyers/Suppliers Expo beginning at 2:00 and remaining open until 6:00.

The open forum will begin at 3:00 and last until 4:00. The reception will be from 5:00 to 7:00. All events will be held in adjacent rooms, so it will be very easy to go back and forth.

And as if this were not enough, this day event is free—including lunch and a reception that evening—as long as you register before September 11. Even if you forget to do that, it will only cost \$10 at the door. What a deal! In case you have not received a brochure, one is included for your convenience in this newsletter.

We are looking forward to seeing you on September 18 in the Brumfield-Caffey Annex at LSU Alexandria. Contact Jack Siekkinen at (504) 386-0471 or Ramsay Smith at (504) 388-4255 for additional information.

A Perfect Partnership

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Once they have been identified, we will set out to determine the most effective way of delivering a new benefit that will serve our general membership. We employ this "shot-gun" technique. The Louisiana Forest Products Laboratory, on the other hand, uses a "rifle" approach. They carefully pinpoint a particular member's problem and consult with him to resolve it. The Lab offers an outstanding service to our forest products industry. It's hard to believe these services are provided free of charge."

Sometimes the two organizations will operate in tandem. A fairly recent example involves the Associa-

tion of Interior Designers. Jack Siekkinen addressed the New Orleans chapter's monthly ASID meeting, which was held at LFIA artist member Francis Swigart's New Orleans studio. Siekkinen explained the key role the LFIA plays on behalf of our state's furniture and furnishings producers. He encouraged the designers to visit the LFIA showroom in Ponchatoula and to work with our Louisiana craftsmen and artists. He set the stage for the Forest Products Lab to address the group by pointing out that designers should have a good understanding of hardwoods and the furniture produced with them. The group has since been in touch with Dr. Ramsay Smith to have him address a future meeting.

In their most recent endeavor, the two entities are playing a salient role in the creation of a statewide conference for Louisiana's forest products and furnishings industries. This first of its kind meeting in Alexandria, Louisiana has something for everyone. It brings together buyers, sellers, experts and consultants from business and government. There will be seminars, networking and even a teleconference beamed in live from Tennessee on the Clean Air Act. Refreshments, lunch and a reception round out this September 18th event.

And who should you contact for more information? You guessed it—LFIA at (504) 386-0471 or the Louisiana Forest Products Lab at (504) 388-4255.

LFPL Researcher Visits New Zealand

Rado Gazo from the Louisiana Forest Products Laboratory just returned from New Zealand. He spent four months as a visiting scientist at the New Zealand Forest Research Institute.

Rado used his previous expertise to join a team of NZFRI researchers with a goal to optimize remanufacturing technologies, improve recovery from radiata pine logs and enhance product value.

Plantation radiata pine makes up as much as 90 percent of exotic forest in New Zealand. The annual harvest of radiata pine in 1991 was 11.9 million m³ and 16 million m³ in 1995. This annual harvest will increase to 25.3 million m³ by 2005 (38 million m³ by 2025) if current rate of 50,000 hectares per annum of new planting is maintained. This makes it the most important commercial species in New Zealand.

Radiata pine is used for many different products throughout the world. One of the growing radiata pine product market segments is millwork. Millwork sales were predicted to increase by 56 percent in 1995 to NZ\$ 64 million (11). The United States is a major customer in this market, taking one quarter of all millwork produced in New Zealand. Millwork products in the US are usually produced from random width shop lumber. Cutting and processing such lumber is quite a new concept in New Zealand.

To address some of the arising questions, the team constructed a database of random width radiata pine lumber. By selectively choosing trees with known characteristics, they will be able to answer not only questions of remanufacturers but also those of geneticists, growers and sawmillers. These questions include: which tree clones and what clone characteristics are most suitable or desired for specific products or markets; which tree characteristics and what parts of the tree are most desirable for specific products; which sawing strategy is optimal in terms of recovery and product value in sawmills; what recovery yields remanufacturers can expect; which processing method is most suitable for specific parts orders; what distribution of part sizes can be obtained from radiata pine boards of given characteristics, etc. Look for results from this project to be published in scientific journals in the near future.



Pictured above is Rado Gazo standing next to a cross-section of a 46 year old Radiata Pine in Rotorua, New Zealand.



Louisiana Natural Resource Directory in Compilation

Have you ever needed a handy guide to help you contact individuals who can assist you with forestry issues? Wildlife? Fisheries? Environmental issues? Extension agents? Would you like to know who the consulting foresters are? The timber buyers? The timber companies? The environmental organizations? The research organizations? The schools?

The School of Forestry, Wildlife, & Fisheries is compiling a directory of individuals and organizations in Louisiana who can be contacted about various natural resource issues. If you would like a copy when it comes off the press, drop a note to Dr. Niels de Hoop, LSU Forestry, Wildlife, & Fisheries Bldg., Baton Rouge, LA 70803-6202, and he will see to it that you get on the mailing list. If you have a friend who owns timber land, pass this note along to him or her.

Lumber Drying for Added Value

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Freshly cut lumber contains a significant amount of water. Nearly all of this water must be removed before the lumber can be used for many purposes. If the wood is not dried prior to its use, it will dry while in service, shrinking and either leaving

gaps between boards that were originally tight together or causing

warping and splitting. To minimize these problems, lumber produced commercially is dried to the average moisture content consistent with that found where the wood will finally be used.

There are various types of drying processes available. These include steam-heated kiln drying, dehumidification drying and vacuum, microwave and radio-frequency drying. However, the first two drying processes are primarily used commercially for hardwoods. The primary difference between a steam kiln and a dehumidification kiln lies in the way the relative humidity of the air is regulated. In a steam kiln, the air is heated, which reduces the relative humidity and increases the water holding capacity of the air. The hot air when saturated has to be vented and replaced with colder outside air. The higher temperatures facilitate moisture flow in the wood but weaken the wood structure making it more susceptible for degrade. Steam kilns require a boiler to produce the steam and a chamber that can withstand the higher temperatures. Therefore, they are relatively expensive to build, maintain and operate. A large amount of lumber must be dried to be economical.

The air in a dehumidification kiln is regulated by removing the moisture in the air over refrigeration type coils. This process does not require high

temperatures, which helps the wood maintain its strength and reduces degrade. Dehumidification units can be obtained in various sizes to allow drying smaller quantities of lumber more economically. In addition, the lower temperatures and non-condensing kiln environments allow less expensive chambers to be used. This greatly reduces overall costs, bringing lumber drying capabilities to small operators.

Dehumidification drying has been widely used in states like Michigan, North Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia by small lumber producers and furniture manufacturers. The introduction of small, commercial dehumidifiers for lumber drying has allowed small firms, including industries involved in secondary manufacture of hardwood products, to enter the kiln-drying segment of the industry. In the future, as log prices rise faster than lumber prices, more and more sawmills, especially the small- and medium-sized mills, will install dehumidification drying equipment. This will increase their value-added processing and let them remain profitable.

Louisiana is lacking in kiln-drying facilities and capabilities. In the effort to increase the value-added opportunities in the state, this important segment of the industry should be strengthened. The LFPL is coordinating an one-day drying workshop to provide a basic knowledge of how to dry lumber successfully in a small- to medium-scale operation. Attendees will learn fundamentals of wood-water-shrinkage relations, kiln types available, kiln-drying principles, drying degrade and prevention, energy requirements and cost comparison of kiln drying. The workshop is scheduled on October 24, 1996. For more information, contact Dr. Qinglin Wu at (504) 388-8369.

1996 Wood Products Industry Directory Now Available

The **1996 Solid Wood Products Industry Directory**, compiled and edited by Richard Vlosky and JoAnn Doucet, is now available for distribution. This year's edition combines primary and secondary companies in one volume. Twenty-five of 80 primary companies (31%) and 216 of an estimated 512 secondary companies (42%) responded to a request to be included in the directory.

In the primary sector, responding companies reported gross sales of \$564 million in 1995 with an average of \$22.6 million. These companies have an average of 102 employees with 3,376 total employees represented. The secondary or value-added

sector respondents in total reported 1995 gross sales of \$194 million with an average of \$1.25 million. The secondary industry is characterized by smaller companies with an average of 13 employees per respondent company and a total of 2,603 employees represented.

In addition to the hardcopy version of the directory, the Louisiana Forest Products Laboratory has developed an electronic version called the **Louisiana Forest Products Producer Capabilities Database**. Interested parties can call the Lab and have a customized company search done for either the primary or secondary directory respondents across a

number of variables including species, grade, products, dimensions, shipping mode, equipment used and marketing area. For example, a list of companies that produce FAS kiln-dried cypress can be generated. Inquiry results, including company name, contact name, phone and fax number will be faxed by the Lab free of charge.

For more information on obtaining a copy of the directory call Pat Lefeaux at (504) 388-4255. For information on a Louisiana Forest Products Producer Capabilities Database inquiry, call either Richard Vlosky at (504) 388-4527 or JoAnn Doucet at (504) 388-4157.

Alternative Natural Materials in Furniture Making

Eva Haviarova, Niels De Hoop's doctorate student, is investigating the possibilities of using alternative natural materials in furniture production. The idea is to increase the variety of materials available to furniture and cabinet manufacturers and effectively combine them with conventional natural materials.

Alternative natural materials, such as small trees, branches, roots, shoots, bark, unignified plants, grasses, leaves, stems and fibrous plants, are not widely used in industrial furniture production today. Potential weaving materials extracted from plants and trees like bamboo, rattan, willow, cattail, palms, reeds, sea grass, flax, cotton, sisal, jute, blackberry, lime, birch and others are overlooked. However, countless methods exist for creating bigger surface elements from these materials. By incorporating alternative natural materials into non-structural furniture parts, such as door panels, and combining them sensitively with the solid wood parts, it is possible to create products that are in harmony with the environment in the context of sustainability. Alternative natural materials are generally easier to produce than solid wood because they have high regeneration capacities with short rotation times. The applications have endless variability and high aesthetic appearance.

Research is underway to develop alternative natural materials with strengthened mechanical properties that would enable production of durable products with the high artisan value and natural outlook. If you would like more information, call Eva Haviarova at the Louisiana Forest Products Laboratory (504) 388-4255.

Calendar of Events And Workshops

Sept. 18, 1996

Governor's Conference for Louisiana's Forest Products and Furnishings Industries. LSU Alexandria, Brumfield-Caffey Annex, 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. For more information call Jack Siekkinen (LFIA) at (504) 386-0471 or W. Ramsay Smith (Louisiana Forest Products Lab) at (504) 388-4255.

Oct. 24, 1996

Louisiana Forest Products Laboratory Presents Basics of Lumber Drying. Held in the School of Forestry, Wildlife & Fisheries Building, on the Louisiana State University campus in Baton Rouge, Room 228, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. For more information call Qinglin Wu, Drying Workshop Coordinator, at (504) 388-4255.

Oct. 28-31, 1996

The Fourth International Wood Engineering Conference. Held at the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel. For more information call the Dept. of Civil Engineering, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, at (504) 388-8698.

Sept. - Dec., 1996

Louisiana Furnishings Industry Association (LFIA) holds regular monthly meetings at the Ponchatoula headquarters. If you are interested call LFIA at (504) 386-0471 for the date and time.

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LFPL Newsletter Graphic Design, Barbara Corns

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