

## Unified Efforts Work

Things are happening in the Louisiana forest products industry! The economic importance of this industry to the state is being better realized by the Governor's office, the Legislature, the Department of Economic Development and various service industries, like the banking industry. This is shown by the attention being given to the industry and the efforts of the industry to gain this recognition. The combination of these efforts is essential.

With the legislative bodies providing the ground rules and the structure to work within, it is absolutely necessary that the industry work to keep that body informed of issues and accomplishments. Most commonly, this is done by larger firms that have the wherewithal to maintain contact. This also needs to be done by the smaller firms, those that primarily make up the secondary processing industry. How? Through unified efforts.

A unified industry best communicates through associations, such as the Louisiana Furnishings Industry Association and the Louisiana Forestry Association. LFA, headed by Executive Director Buck Vandersteen, has been doing an excellent job in this category. LFIA is becoming more prominent and working harder in this area under the guidance of Jack Siekkinen. LFIA is becoming stronger with a membership jump from



*The Louisiana Forest Products Laboratory welcomes Dr. William Richardson (pictured on the left), the new Chancellor for the LSU Agricultural Center. Dr. Richardson was previously the Vice Chancellor for Public Service and Dean of the College of Agriculture.*

approximately 40 members a year ago to more than 127 at this point. If you are not a member currently, it's time to join.

Another area showing strength is the attendance of industry members at various functions. The Governor's Conference for Louisiana's Forest Products and Furnishings Industries held on September 18 in Alexandria is a prime example. This conference, hosted by departments in the state government, the LSU Agricultural Center and businesses, had more than

150 attendees who heard morning talks on finances and pollution prevention, capped by a keynote talk by Secretary of Commerce Kevin Reilly on the importance of this industry to the state. More importantly, participants took part in discussing what issues should be examined for the industry in this state. An excellent discussion was held, and topics such as safety, workers' compensation and environmental regulations were brought out as

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## Governor's Forest Products Industry Development Task Force

Governor Foster has established a Forest Products Industry Development Task Force to identify opportunities for, and barriers to, growth and development in the value-added forest products industry in Louisiana. By fostering growth of existing companies as well as encouraging corporate recruitment, the goals of the Task Force are to maximize the value of Louisiana's forest resources and to

provide economic and employment opportunities for its citizens. The Task Force is comprised of representatives from industry, associations, government and academia. The Task Force has two Co-Chairmen. Dr. Richard Vlosky, Assistant Professor of Forest Products Marketing at the Louisiana Forest Products Laboratory, has been designated by Department of Economic Development

Secretary Kevin Reilly as Task Force Co-Chair along with Mr. Cyril LeJeune, Associate State Forester at the Department of Agriculture & Forestry, designated by Agriculture & Forestry Commissioner Bob Odom. The Task Force will be presenting Governor Foster with recommendations on March 15, 1997. ■

### Quick Tip: Scheduling

There seems to be a lack of scheduling and project-organizing computer programs tailored for secondary wood manufacturers. If you have to manage several projects at once, or have a project that requires many operations, you could benefit from such a program to get organized, finish on time, plan utilization of your resources, etc.

One solution could be already in your computer. Microsoft Project® is a general project-organizing program that can be readily used in our industry, as one of LFIA members recently found out.<sup>1</sup> Enter your project

names, operations and their duration and priorities, and you can print schedules for everyone in your company, critical path (tells you which task are critical to completing project on time) or PERT (network or flow diagram) charts plus much more. To find out more about how you can use this tool to increase your efficiency, call Rado Gazo at (504) 388-6432. ■

<sup>1</sup>Mention of the trade names is solely to identify product used and doesn't imply endorsement by the Louisiana Forest Products Laboratory. Discussion of this product does not constitute recommendation of its use.

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important issues facing the industry today that need attention. If you missed it this year, plan to attend next year.

Another indication was the turnout for a one-day Drying Workshop held at Louisiana Forest Products Laboratory. This workshop organized by Dr. Qinglin Wu from our staff and Dr. Robert Mills from Cooperative Extension brought in a packed house of 40 participants. This workshop provided a good insight on a cross section of the industry who were eager to get information and also share information with each other. There was also an air of enthusiasm and optimism about the future of

processing forest products. In fact, as a result of this gathering a three-day wood drying workshop will be held toward the end of February. The announcements will be out within the next month.

Another strong indication is the recognition of the industry by the Governor's office through establishing the Governor's Forest Products Industry Development Task Force. This task force, headed by Dr. Richard Vlosky of our staff, is designed to develop information and provide suggestions to the legislative body by March 15 on factors that inhibit the growth and expansion of

the forest products industry. Ten members from the industry, government and academic sectors make up the taskforce. They are inviting various individuals to discuss primary issues and obtain their input. Please see more about this in the Task Force article on this page.

So things are happening, but they can only happen with the combined efforts of the legislative and industrial bodies. Your voice will be heard more effectively if it is combined with others through association work. We each have a voice, and it becomes stronger when combined with our colleagues. ■



## New Extension Service Employee

The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service has announced that Todd Shupe was hired as a Forest Products Specialist effective October 1, 1996. Todd is no stranger to the Louisiana Forest Products Laboratory because he has been a doctoral research assistant with the Lab since January, 1994 and has participated in many of the Lab's outreach programs. Todd will be responsible for continuing education in forest products throughout the state; he will deal with both primary and secondary wood products processing responsibilities. This position is housed in the Economics and Natural Resources Division of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service. He will be working closely with the Louisiana Forest Products Laboratory and other organizations throughout the state to

provide technical assistance for wood manufacturers and hobbyists to improve rural economic development, value-added processing and market competitiveness. Todd hopes to visit as many woodworking businesses as possible in the coming year. He invites people to call him at (504) 388-4087 or stop by Room 216 in Knapp Hall when on the LSU campus. When asked to summarize his feelings on the new position, Todd said, "I am very pleased that the opportunity arose to continue to be a part of LSU and join the Extension Service. I enjoyed my stay at the Louisiana Forest Products Laboratory. I look forward to the opportunity to work with people throughout the state and the challenges that the new position will offer." ■



*Todd Shupe  
Forest Products Specialist*

## Accident Rates: Are We Measuring the Wrong Things?

A hypothetical scheme, but we've seen it happen before: ABC Millworks intensified their accident prevention program, but ended up with a rash of accidents anyway. What went wrong? Did the safety program fail? Were they *so* safety-conscious that they actually *caused* an accident? Was it bad luck combined with unfortunate timing?

Although virtually all accidents are preventable, an element of randomness is involved in accidents: all of the factors in an accident happened to combine at a particular time. It takes time to see if accident rates/severity will really decline. ABC Millworks's accidents are most likely the result of a streak of bad luck. The best thing for them to do is to continue the accident prevention program or improve it even more. It should include formal accident investigations and corrective measures.

If accident rates include elements of chance, then is it justifiable to rate part of a supervisor's performance on accident rates? Focusing on the negatives may lead to under-reporting or failure to seek timely medical attention.

This is part of a new line of thinking being pioneered by some academics and practicing industrial safety specialists. It suggests that supervisors' performance ratings should focus more on elements such as:

- safety meetings,
- one-on-one contact,
- safety inspections,
- follow-up on improvement suggestions,
- employee training,
- professional development activities,
- accident investigations, and
- housekeeping audits.

If these elements are in place, the improvements in accident rates and workers' compensation costs should follow. ■



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## Louisiana Forest Products Laboratory Conducts Marketing Study in Northwest Louisiana

Louisiana  
Forest  
Products  
Laboratory

The Louisiana Forest Products Laboratory, part of the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station, has launched a market-based study of the secondary wood products industry as a means to further economic development in a 10-parish area in Northwest Louisiana.

The US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration is funding \$69,000 of the \$99,000 project. In addition, \$5,000 has been committed to this project as a matching grant from the Coordinating and Development Corporation in Shreveport, Louisiana. The Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station will contribute approximately \$25,000 to support the study.

The Coordinating and Development Corporation also volunteered its offices, staff and other resources to support the marketing study.

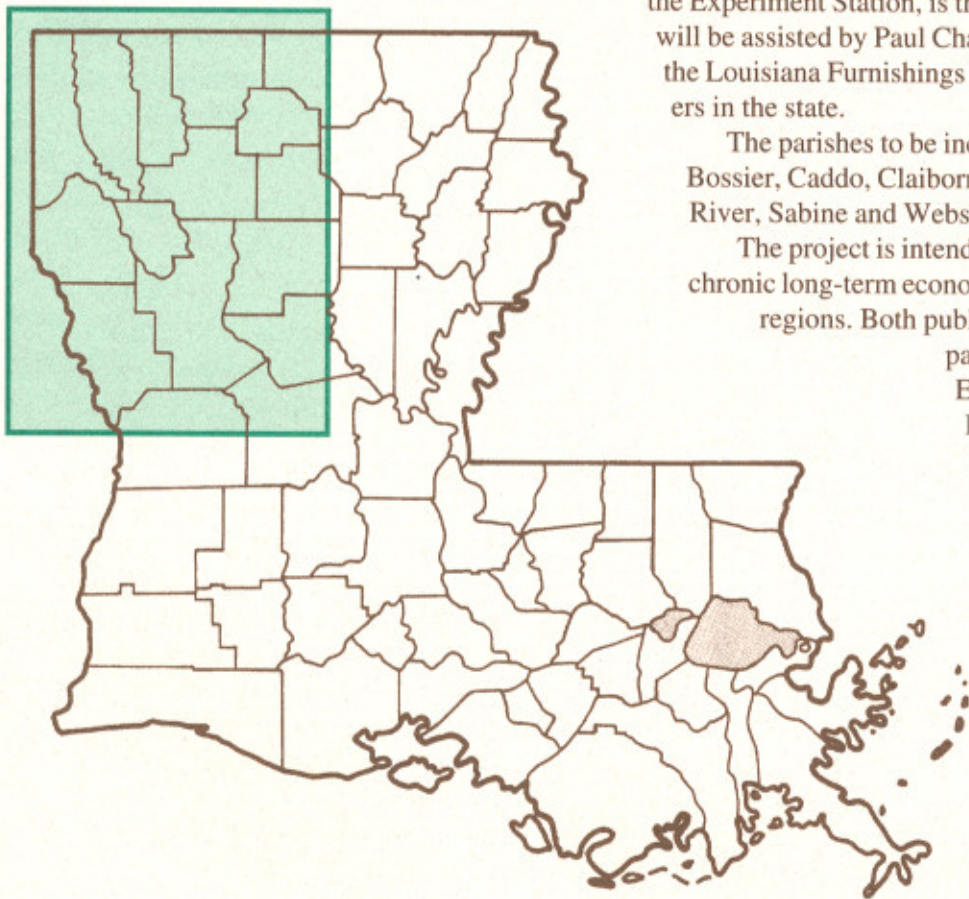
Dr. Richard P. Vlosky, professor of forest products marketing in the Experiment Station, is the principal investigator in the study. He will be assisted by Paul Chance, previously executive director of the Louisiana Furnishings Industry Association and other researchers in the state.

The parishes to be included in the study are Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, DeSoto, Lincoln, Natchitoches, Red River, Sabine and Webster.

The project is intended to identify ways to help alleviate chronic long-term economic deterioration in rural resource-based regions. Both public and private sector input and participation will be integral to the project. Entities including the Coordinating and Development Corporation, industry participants, academic institutions and state and local governing and economic development bodies will be consulted in this study.

Improvement of industry competitiveness can increase potential for jobs creation and resource utilization in the rural-based Louisiana forest products industry. However, to attain this potential, a wide variety of issues must be addressed. For example, the study will address existing consumer market trends, industry location decision criteria, raw materials availability, labor force skills and training requirements, target market identification and company recruitment and retention strategies.

The project will take about 18 months to complete, the investigators said. For more information call Richard Vlosky at (504) 388-4527. ■





## Lumber Drying Workshop Offered

The LFPL and the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service successfully coordinated a one-day workshop on basics of lumber drying on Oct. 24, 1996. Forty people from various sectors of the forest products industry in the state attended the workshop. "Good multi-media presentations," "very informative and done in a relaxed way," "I liked the way the wood was broken down, showing the actual cells" and "information on degrade was useful because we (kiln operators) often get blamed for it" are some of the evaluations from the seminar. About half of the participants expressed their interest in coming back for a three-day drying workshop. The LFPL is therefore planning a three-day workshop that will provide hands-on experience in kiln control and schedule manipulation.

For more information, contact Dr. Qinglin Wu or Dr. Ramsay Smith at (504) 388-4255. ■

**WORKSHOPS**

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## Small Wood Products Business Workshop Scheduled

The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service will be offering a workshop, "Strategies on Starting or Improving a Small Wood Products Business," on February 6, 1997 at the Winn Parish courthouse in Winnfield, LA. The goal of this workshop is to educate the public regarding the multitude of issues involved in starting a small wood products business as either a hobbyist or as a primary source of income. Participants will learn proper procedures for selecting and handling lumber. Species specific information will help to identify species that are difficult to

dry or are highly prone to stain and mildew. In addition, lectures will be given on optimal plant processing and layout to optimize production and minimize ergonomic problems. The attendees will benefit by learning helpful business skills such as accounting and inventory. Mike Womack, owner of Wolf Creek Forestry Products, will conclude the workshop by telling of his personal experience of how lumber drying has improved the value-added market of his lumber business and his general business experiences. The workshop is intended to be beneficial to primary

and secondary producers of wood and wood products. People who want to improve their small wood working business or are interested in starting a small business are encouraged to call Dr. Todd Shupe, Assistant Specialist, Forest Products, at the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service. There is no registration fee and lunch will be provided. However, registration is critical to guarantee a sufficient number of participants to have the workshop.

For more information contact Dr. Shupe at (504) 388-4087. ■

## Want To Submit An Article?

If you would like to have an article printed in the newsletter, contact JoAnn Doucet at

(504) 388-4157 or fax (504) 388-4251.



## Calendar of Events And Workshops

- February 6, 1997** Workshop on "Strategies on Starting or Improving a Small Wood Products Business." Held at the Winn Parish Courthouse in Winnfield, LA. For more information contact Todd Shupe, of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service at LSU at (504) 388-4087.
- Feb. 26-28, 1997** Louisiana Forest Products Laboratory Presents - **Wood-Drying Workshop.** Held in the School of Forestry, Wildlife & Fisheries Building, on the Louisiana State University campus in Baton Rouge. For more information call Qinglin Wu, Wood Drying Workshop Coordinator, at (504) 388-4255.
- March, 1997** Louisiana Tech University, School of Forestry's **Annual Hardwood Log, Lumber, and Tree Grading Workshop.** For more information call Mark Gibson at (318) 257-4985.
- April, 1997** Workshop on "Strategies on Starting or Improving a Small Wood Products Business." Held in Shreveport, LA. Time and place have not been determined at the time of this printing. For more information call Todd Shupe, of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service at LSU at (504) 388-4087.
- January - May** 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.



### LFPL FACULTY & STAFF LSU

W. Ramsay Smith - Program Leader  
 Niels de Hoop - Environmental and Safety  
 Rich Vlosky - Forest Products Marketing  
 Rado Gazo - Wood Processing  
 Qinglin Wu - Wood Processing  
 Elvin T. Choong - Wood Physics  
 Pat Lefeaux - Chief Clerk II  
 JoAnn Doucet - Research Associate

**LA Tech**  
 Mark Gibson - Material Properties  
 George Grozdits - Research Associate

**Louisiana State University Agricultural Center**  
 H. Rouse Caffey, Chancellor  
**Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station**  
 R. Larry Rogers, Vice Chancellor and Director  
**School of Forestry, Wildlife, & Fisheries**  
 Stanley B. Carpenter, Director  
**Louisiana Forest Products Laboratory**  
 W. Ramsay Smith, Program Director  
 Forestry, Wildlife, & Fisheries Building  
 Baton Rouge, LA 70803-6202  
 TEL (504) 388-4155 FAX (504) 388-4251  
<http://www.lfpl.forestry.lsu.edu>  
 LFPL Newsletter Graphic Design, Barbara Corns

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Louisiana State University  
 Forestry, Wildlife, & Fisheries Building  
 Baton Rouge, LA 70803-6202

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