

The Link

Newsletter | November 2024



Building a Stronger Industry

by Ian Faight

Executive Vice President, HMA



We're fresh off our Fall Regional Meeting and it was great being able to tour several excellent facilities and catch up with everyone in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. I know October was filled with a busy meeting and travel schedule, so I appreciate all who were able to participate.

- Thank you to the **Kendrick family** for inviting us to Edgewood and Muscatine to see their facilities—including two of their sawmills, their Forever Cabinets by Kendrick plant, and their Kendrick Home and Shimlee wood sign operations. Thank you to **Steve Bruggeman and his team** for welcoming us to their mill and dry kiln operations in Hopkinton. And thank you to **HNI** for allowing us into their panel manufacturing plant in Muscatine.
- Thank you to **Tripp Pryor** from the **American Hardwood Export Council** for talking to us about the European Union Deforestation Regulation.
- And thank you to the HMA members and suppliers who stepped up to the plate as sponsors: **Baillie Group; Kendrick, Inc.; Stella-Jones Corporation; Bruggeman Lumber;** and **Kittrell Appraisals**.

Earlier in October, I was able to attend the Railway Tie Association's 106th Annual Symposium & Technical Conference in Henderson, Nevada. HMA hosted a forum on the hardwood market that was moderated by Dana Lee Cole, executive director of the Hardwood Federation. It was my first time at an RTA event, so I found it particularly informative, and I look forward to collaborating on future events.

Next on the HMA calendar is our 2025 National Conference and Expo, which will take place in Tennessee, **Tuesday-Thursday, June 10-12**, at the Marriott Knoxville Downtown. More details will be hitting your inbox soon.

As the holidays approach, I hope you're able to find time to relax and recharge. And if I don't talk to you, enjoy Thanksgiving.

Ian

We Moved!

HMA's office needs and ways of working have changed over the last several years. With less equipment and storage requirements, the capability to work remotely, and an expiring lease, the time was right to find a modern and efficient office where staff can interact with more people and creative minds. As of November 1, HMA found a new home at a coworking—shared office—space in Pittsburgh.

Please update your records accordingly.

Our physical address is:

**Hardwood Manufacturers Association
2681 Sidney Street
Office 128
Pittsburgh, PA 15203**

All dues invoices and meeting remittances, should be sent to:

**PO Box 640632
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-0632**

Additionally, if you'd like to receive your dues invoices via email and/or would like to set up automatic electronic payment of dues, get in touch with Ian Faight at ian@hardwood.org.



Fall Regional Meeting Photo Recap

Kendrick, Inc. | Edgewood, Iowa



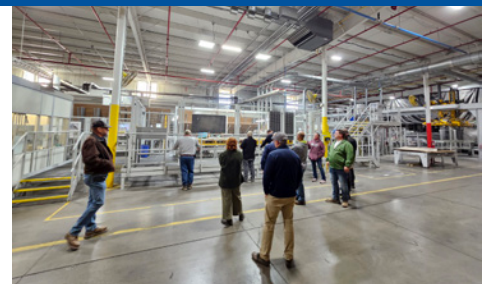
Bruggeman Lumber | Hopkinton, Iowa



Kendrick Forest Products Muscatine | Muscatine, Iowa



HNI Manufacturing Plant | Mustatine, Iowa



Disaster Relief: HMA is Here to Help

Has your company been affected by recent storms, a fire, or another natural disaster? From reduced production capacity and damaged equipment to filing insurance claims and fulfilling other financial obligations, an unexpected disaster can have severe implications for your daily operations.

HMA is here to help in any way possible. Reach out to Ian at ian@hardwood.org or call **412.244.0440**.

Relief also may be available to you through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

For more information on available resources and to apply for assistance, visit disasterassistance.gov.

If you are able, support private organizations, such as Samaritan's Purse, a nondenominational evangelical Christian organization that provides spiritual and physical aid to hurting people around the world. Learn more at samaritanspurse.org.

And consider donating clothes and supplies to local shelters, or blood to the American Red Cross at redcross.org.

EXIM Bank Offers Disaster Relief Assistance

The Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM) has relief provisions in place for its customers, exporters, and financial institutions located throughout the U.S. that have been declared federal disaster areas by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

EXIM is offering the relief measures to enable businesses and financial institutions that participate in the company's programs to return to their business concerns and EXIM-related obligations at an appropriate time without penalty. For a list of EXIM relief measures and contact details, visit EXIM.gov.

Take Advantage of U.S. Forest Service Funding Opportunities

On October 24, the U.S. Forest Service announced the **availability of \$34 million** in funding to support innovation and jobs in the forestry sector, while supporting healthy forest landscapes. The agency is seeking proposals that will spark innovation, create new markets for sustainable wood products and renewable wood energy, and expand processing capacity.

The funding is available through the Forest Service's three key **grant programs** to support the forest products economy: Wood Innovations Grant (WIG), Community Wood Grant, and Wood Products Infrastructure Assistance Grant programs.

Wood Innovations Grants

Application period closes December 11, 2024

The Wood Innovations Grant Program stimulates, expands, and supports U.S. wood products markets and wood energy markets to support the long-term management of our National Forest System and other forest lands. National focus areas include mass timber, renewable wood energy, and technological development that supports hazardous fuel reduction and sustainable forest management.

Community Wood Grants

Application period closes December 18, 2024

The Community Wood Grant Program provides funding to install thermally led community wood energy systems or to build innovative wood product manufacturing facilities. The Forest Service expects renewable wood energy systems installed under this program to use the most stringent control technologies. The program places extra emphasis on assisting sawmills in economically challenged areas to retool or add advanced technology.

Wood Products Infrastructure Assistance Grants

Application period closes December 18, 2024

The Wood Products Infrastructure Assistance Grants may be used to provide support for facilities that purchase and process byproducts of ecosystem restoration projects. This includes applications to establish, reopen, retrofit, expand, or improve a sawmill or other wood-processing facility in close proximity to federal or Indian lands that need ecosystem restoration and will generate byproducts.

Visit the **Forest Service website** for more information and to apply.

Staying Social with Real American Hardwood

by Ian Faight

Executive Vice President, HMA | Digital Community Manager, RAHC

In October, the Real American Hardwood Coalition (RAHC) continued to post engaging content on various social media platforms that promotes Real American Hardwood® products and tells our industry's stories.

Are you following the RAHC? If not, now is the time to follow along and join the conversation. Keep reading for a brief recap of what you may have missed from the past month.

Shining the Spotlight on the Hardwood Industry

Manufacturing Day (MFG Day) is celebrated nationally on the first Friday in October. It is recognized as the manufacturing industry's best opportunity to inspire the next generation, positively shift perceptions, and build the foundation for the manufacturing workforce of the future.



For this year's MFG Day, on October 4, the RAHC posted a video going behind the scenes at Sheoga Hardwood Flooring to share their company's story. Located in the rural hills of Geauga County, Ohio, the company manufactures solid and engineered Real American Hardwood flooring. The brief video focused on the company's use of locally sourced wood and their efficient drying and slow-milling processes, all while sharing the industry's sustainability message.

Watch the video on Instagram or [YouTube](#).

Want to Collaborate?

If your company has photos, a residential or commercial project, facility tour, interview, event, care and repair or maintenance tips, or other original content to share, reach out to the RAHC at info@realamericanhardwood.org. Let's chat.



Telling a Story with Site-Sourced Materials

Each month, the RAHC shares a gorgeous project that focuses on the natural beauty, charm, character, and other attributes of Real American Hardwood—and that includes environmental and sustainability messaging. And when it comes to selecting natural, sustainable materials that tell a story, nothing compares to Real American Hardwood. For one custom Atlanta home, the stories continue for site-sourced red oak, white oak, and hickory trees that were given new life in a variety of applications.

See the post on [Instagram](#).

What's So Special About Red Oak?

National Forest Products week is celebrated each year during the third week of October. To recognize this year's event, the RAHC took the opportunity to recognize healthy forests and the products they produce with a particular focus on red oak—a prolific, abundant, readily available, and undeniably beautiful Real American Hardwood species.

Watch the video on [YouTube](#).



The Latest from Capitol Hill

by Dana Lee Cole

Executive Director, Hardwood Federation



EUDR Flexibility, Suspension of Port Strike Deliver Good News

During the first week in October, U.S. hardwood companies breathed sighs of relief as reprieves were granted related to two issues of great concern to the industry.

- First, on October 1, the European Commission **announced** that it was proposing a 12-month delay for implementation of the E.U. Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). This action signals much needed flexibility for a rule that the U.S. wood products industry and broader agriculture sector deem to be unworkable. The Hardwood Federation has been working closely with the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) to educate U.S. government officials about the seriously negative impacts of this regulation on the industry. The implementation delay will give us time to continue our efforts and allow AHEC time to further develop and finalize some potential reporting solutions.
- In a second much welcomed development on October 4, dockworkers on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts agreed to extend their existing contract until January 15, 2025, suspending the work stoppage that began midnight on September 30. With the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), representing workers, and the U.S. Maritime Alliance (USMX), which represents the ports, returning to the bargaining table, the issue of automation remains the most challenging issue to resolve. On October 25, the ILA and USMX **issued a joint statement** indicating that the parties will resume contract negotiations in November.

On the advocacy front, the Federation submitted a dozen examples to the Department of Commerce of hardships caused by the strike, illustrating the necessity of bringing a quick end to the work stoppage. Also, the Federation and its partners in the ocean shipping coalition **sent a letter** to the President on October 2, urging the Administration to use available tools to end the strike and "take immediate action to resolve this situation expeditiously."

House Natural Resources Chair Westerman Takes on NEPA Reform

House Natural Resources Chairman Bruce Westerman (R-AR) has released a draft bill to reform the cumbersome National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) permitting processes. Although originally focusing on the energy sector, the bill is evolving into

a broader vehicle, reducing the time necessary to obtain a permit and requiring courts to conclude legal challenges related to NEPA permits within 120 days. According to Hill staff, the bill may move during the lame duck session following the election.

Hardwoods Fight for Tax Relief

On October 15, the Federation submitted comments to the Main Street Tax Team—a working group established by House Ways & Means Chair Jason Smith (R-MO) back in April to identify key tax priorities—to help ensure that hardwoods benefit from the investment certainty created by the 2017 tax law. While endorsing the House tax package that passed earlier this year, which restores 100% bonus depreciation of equipment, the depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) business interest deduction and an R&D tax credit, the letter urges Congress to address unfinished business. Key items include continued estate tax flexibility and making permanent the 20% small business deduction for pass-through entities. In addition to submitting comments to the Main Street Tax Team, the Federation joined more than 65 allies in a letter to House tax leaders urging outright repeal of the estate tax.

Share Your Views on OSHA's Proposed Heat Rule

The feds have **proposed** first-time-ever workplace heat standards that would impose more red tape on sawmills and other manufacturers. The Federation wants your feedback on the proposal, so that we can strengthen the comments we plan to submit to the agency. Specifically, how would a federal heat standard impact your operations and your bottom line? Here are three key take-aways from the proposal:

- It requires employers to draft a workplace Heat Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (HIIPP) with site-specific information to control "heat hazards."
- Implements control measures triggered by a heat index of 80 degrees that include cool drinking water and break areas, requiring a sawmill to monitor the temperature and heat index at various locations during business hours.
- Requires more control measures when heat index reaches 90 degrees, including mandatory 15-minute rest breaks every two hours.

If you find the above workplace rules burdensome, please share your perspectives with Bryan Brendle at Bryan.Brendle@hardwoodfederation.com. To read more about OSHA's proposal, [click here](#).

Implementing Your Social Media Strategy

by Sara Skwaryk

Communications and Administrative Coordinator, HMA

Over the past few months, I have been introducing methods for you to consider as you aim to plan your social media strategy. In that time, perhaps you have tried new things and found what worked or what didn't. Maybe you still aren't convinced social media would work for your business, or perhaps it seems like it's too much work.

This month, I want to take a moment to reiterate some simple steps you can introduce to help organize your thoughts on social media implementation and what it means specifically to your business.

In following advice from Hootsuite's article, *How to Set and Exceed Social Media Goals*, it becomes clear how easy setting up a social strategy can be—and how these steps can ultimately have a positive impact on your business' goals.

To set effective social media goals, it is recommended to start with these steps:

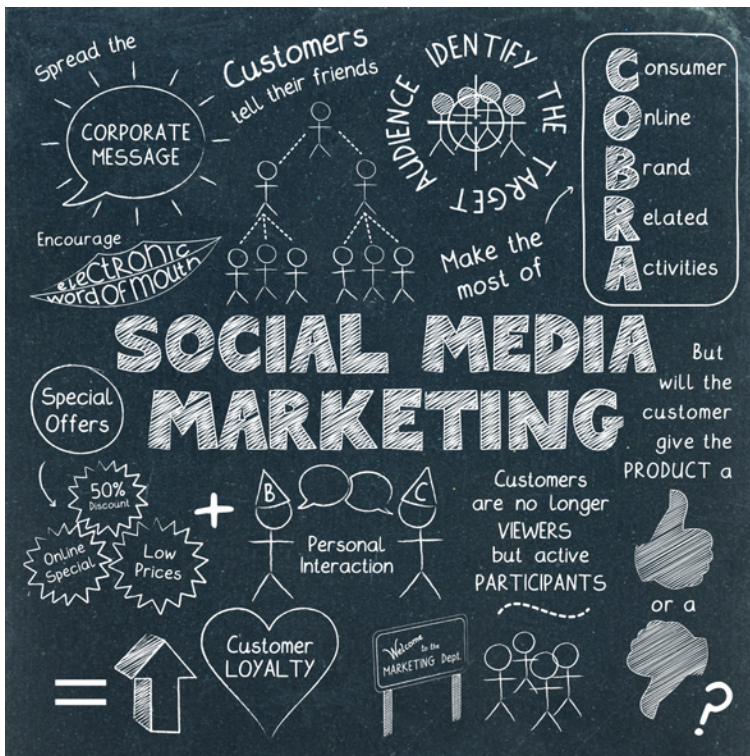
- **Align with Business Objectives** | Identify key problems your business needs to solve or areas for improvement, ensuring your social media goals support these objectives.
- **Use the S.M.A.R.T. Framework** | Create goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. For example, aim to reduce customer wait times or increase content shares.
- **Identify Metrics and KPIs** | Choose relevant metrics based on your goals—such as engagement, reach, traffic, and conversions, to track progress effectively.
- **Plan Your Tactics** | Develop strategies to achieve your goals, such as scheduling posts, engaging with your audience, creating appealing content, and running ads.
- **Execute and Optimize** | Monitor your progress using your selected metrics, and adjust your tactics as needed to stay on track toward your goals. Regular evaluation is crucial for success.

Social media creation is about finding what works for you and your brand, so it's important to try new things and not to let the process discourage you! This opportunity allows you to focus on telling your business' story.

Who are the people that make up your everyday? What values drive your work? These are some questions to get you thinking about how everything comes together.

I encourage and challenge you to take a few minutes out of your day to spend time with these steps, or to talk through ideas with your colleagues, you never know what great ideas are lurking behind the scenes!

Source: Hootsuite



The Link is published each month exclusively for members of the Hardwood Manufacturers Association. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the HMA; HMA staff welcomes comments and questions.

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