

November 2008						
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INSIDE VT WOOD

Reminder...

Remember to submit department news items by Friday 3 p.m. of each week to Will Pfeil at wpfeil@vt.edu for inclusion in Inside VT WOOD each Monday morning. All past issues of Inside VT Wood reside on our department website under the [publications link](#).

News From Paul Winistorfer

- Thank you to Delton Alderman, PhD for his recent generous contribution to our 'Building Our Future' campaign. Delton is a graduate of our program and is employed as a research scientist with the US Forest Service in Princeton, WV. Thank you Delton for your investment in the future of our program. If you are interested in making a contribution to our 'Building Our Future' capital campaign please contact me at 540-231-8854.
- You can purchase \$5.00 tickets for the 'Dean Toss Bingo' fundraiser in support of the CNR Alumni Scholarship Fund, sponsored by the CNR Alumni Board. We have tickets in the main office for the 'Dean Toss Bingo' to be held following the VT vs. Duke football game on November 22, 2008. Tickets are \$5.00 each. The top prize winner will receive \$500 in cash! Please consider supporting this scholarship fund of the CNR Alumni Board.

VT Represented at European Forest Week in Rome

By Urs Buehlmann

From October 20 to 24, 2008, the Department of Wood Science and Forest Products participated in the European Forest Week held at the Food and Agriculture Organization Headquarters in Rome, Italy (Picture 1). Delegates from 46 countries explored issues on sustainable forest management, with a focus on climate change, water, and energy. The European Forest Week (EFW) was co-organized by the European Commission, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, in close collaboration with the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, France.

Contributions from Virginia Tech focused on the current state and the outlook for the North American forest product industries and on activities of department faculty and students



Picture 1. FAO Headquarters in Rome, Italy.

relating to green building programs. A presentation by Buehlmann, Schuler and Bumgardner entitled “Value-added wood products markets” discussed the current state of the North American forest products industries. A central topic was the current state of the U.S. housing market, as the forest products industries are highly dependent on this important market. As you can be seen in Figure 1, starts of new single family housing have declined 62 percent from the peak in 2005, while prices have fallen by 19 percent. Figure 2 shows that housing prices are still elevated compared to family income, despite the recent price declines in the housing market.



Figure 1: U.S. housing prices and median family income 1990-2008.

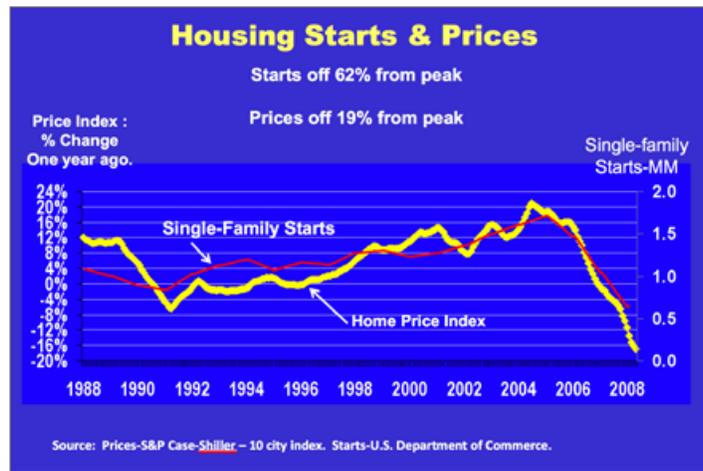


Figure 2: U.S. housing starts and prices 1988-2008.

For the U.S. housing market to stabilize and improve, prices will have to settle closer to the median family income as income is not expected to improve for the near term given the economic problems that the nation faces. The fact that mortgage rates have increased since the announcement of the \$700 billion federal recovery package, with 30 years mortgages being at about 6.5 percent, or 50 basis points higher, does not help the housing market to recover. Bondholders seem to expect inflation to increase due to all the money being printed by the government. The U.S. economy will need time and skilled guidance to overcome the economic challenges it faces.

Buehlmann, Araman and Hindman also presented information about their effort in the area of green building programs in the U.S. Their current research focuses on the recyclability of building waste and a current study being conducted by Kevin Knight, one of their students, who is investigating the merits of the different green building programs in use in the United States. Figure 3 shows a picture



Figure 3. Inside view of storage trailer used to collect waste wood materials from a building site in Blacksburg, VA.

from a building-site collection container at a green building development in Blacksburg. Collecting the wood waste from construction will help determine the amount of recyclable materials generated on building sites and will allow the researchers to find the most appropriate way to recycle and re-sell those materials.

The European Forest Week brought together over four hundred specialists from industry, government, non-governmental, research and private international organizations to share insights and discuss solutions to issues surrounding forestry and the forest products industries. There appeared to be a consensus that the importance of

the world's forests will increase significantly as they will be expected to provide an increasing amount of functions to the growing world population. More information about the European Forest Week can be found at: <http://www.europeanforestweek.org/home/en/> and <http://www.unece.org/timber/>.

Seminar Announcement

Please join us for a presentation by Dr. Janice Earle, on Friday, November 7, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. in the Fralin Auditorium. Dr. Earle currently serves as the Cluster Lead for the Knowledge Building Cluster in the Directorate for Education and Human Resources' (EHR) Division of Research on Learning in Formal and Informal Settings (DRL). The Knowledge Building Cluster includes the Research and Evaluation on Education in Science and Engineering (REESE) program, the Foundation's primary education research program and the CAREER program, a research program for young investigators.

Dr. Earle has worked with multiple EHR programs including the Statewide Systemic Initiatives, Instructional Materials, and Discovery Research K-12. She also manages the Directorate of Education and Human Resources' investments in major policy projects such as the National Academy of Sciences' Center for Education and the American Association for the Advancement of Science's Project 2061. In 2002 Dr. Earle was given responsibility for the internal management of EHR's first thematic portfolio review in mathematics education. She serves on several interagency initiatives such as the American Competitiveness Initiative (K-12 Working Group) and has served as a member of the management team for the TIMSS and TIMSS-R assessments with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). She was a member of the Technical Review Panel for the PISA assessments and served as a member of the Planning Committee for the 2009 NAEP Science Framework. She is currently collaborating with the U.S. Department of Education on creating a Title I Mathematics Toolkit. Dr. Earle received a BA in history from the University of Michigan, a MA from Teachers College, Columbia University, and a PhD in education policy and planning from the University of Maryland.

During her presentation, Dr. Earle will describe current programs and initiatives within the DRL. Additionally, an opportunity will be available to interact with her informally at a social gathering from 2:00-4:00 that afternoon (Nov. 7), location to be determined. Details will follow in the coming week.

TAPPI Announces Scholarships for Packaging Science Students

Knowledge empowers careers. Those involved in the process of teaching or acquiring technical skills understand this mantra.

Knowledge transfer is a marathon which is usually accomplished through community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities. It requires academic training in classrooms and labs, persistence, and financial resources. The cost of acquiring these skills can be challenging and that's where TAPPI can lighten the load.

TAPPI has scholarship resources available for both graduate and undergraduate students with an interest in the pulp, paper, converting, or packaging industries. The scholarships are of two general types:

1. TAPPI Division scholarships. [Information and application forms are online.](#)
2. Cullison scholarship: [Details are available online.](#)

What this message means to you depends on your situation.

- If you're a student, here is an opportunity to apply for financial assistance for the 2010 – 2011 school year. Note that scholarship requirements will vary according by Division so you'll need to check the qualifications carefully. A [reference document](#) is available to guide you.

Also deadlines vary but the earliest is 2/15/09. Mark your calendar now to allow yourself time to create an application that reflects the hard work you've been investing in your career.

- If you are affiliated with a college or university, please share this with your students or other staffers who work with students. They'll be glad you did.

WBC Holds Industry Advisory Board

The Industry Advisory Board of the Wood-Based Composites Center met on October 15th and 16th on the campus of Oregon State University in Corvallis. Dr. Chip Frazier, the Thomas M. Brooks Professor in Virginia Tech's Department of Wood Science and Forest Products, and Director of the WBC, led the meeting. Representatives from WBC member companies gathered to review composite related research efforts and network with academic and industry-based colleagues. Faculty from Center partner universities Virginia Tech, the University of British Columbia, the University of Maine and Oregon State University, provided technical content in the form of presentations and posters. Guests from the University of Minnesota and the Forest Products Laboratory also contributed to the event.



Since 1999, the Wood-Based Composites Center has funded multiple WBC Center Graduate Fellows at Virginia Tech. Students studying in the wood science and related departments complete research projects involving wood composites and adhesion. Present graduate students include Jung Ki Hong, Josh Hosen, Richard Johnson, Eduardo Nicoli (ESM), Jesse Paris, and Yu (Anglea) Zhou. Undergraduate students in the Department of Wood Science and Forest Products also benefit from scholarships provided by the Center. Present undergraduate scholarship recipients include Ben Amoss, Dan Roethle and Adam Scouse.

New Short Course Offered By WBC Held In September



Advanced Wood Adhesion, a new short course offered by the Wood-Based Composites Center, was held at the Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center on September 10 & 11. Twenty-three industry representatives from throughout North America attended this advanced content course taught by Drs. Chip Frazier and David Dillard, both of Virginia Tech, and Dr. Fred Kamke, Oregon State. Dr. Dillard is Professor in the Department of Engineering Science and Mechanics. A good and thought-provoking time was had by all!