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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

- I want to thank Drs. Tom Hammett and Bob Bush for their recent gifts to our 'Building Our Future' campaign. Gifts from our own faculty are so very special and demonstrate passionate commitment and support of our vision for our future. Thank you Tom and Bob for your contributions to 'Building Our Future'. We are almost at our goal of 100% faculty contribution to our campaign!
- Please welcome the following new students to our program this semester.
Gavin Wherry – M.S. student working with Dr. Urs Buehlmann
Andrew Jackson – undergraduate student
Nicholas D'Amico – undergraduate student
Robert Thomas – undergraduate student
- Please mark your calendar for March 13 and plan to participate in the one day conference in Danville Virginia at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research. The conference is titled "The Southern Virginia Forest Products Initiative" and is being hosted by the Southside partner group. See the program information below.
- Friday, February 1st the department graduate students are hosting a "Kick-off the New Year Coffee" in the Brooks lobby. Let's support our graduate students who are taking the initiative to organize and host the department faculty and staff at this informal gathering. The coffee will begin at 10:00 AM.
- Please see the attached faculty position announcement for our new faculty position in Forest Products Business Management. This position is based 75% in Virginia Cooperative Extension and we seek a successful candidate who will work with the industry in our state. Dr. Bond is chairing the search, aided by Drs. Buehlmann, Kline, Smith and Zink-Sharp. Please bring any candidates of interest to the attention of the committee. Note our February 1, 2008 screen date. We have established a web resource site for this search at <http://www.woodscience.vt.edu/searchresources>
- The Virginia Forest Products Association is celebrating their 50th anniversary February 15-17th at Kingsmill Resort in Williamsburg, Virginia. Contact Mike Washko at VFPA for registration information at vfpa.mike@att.net or by phone at 804-737-5625. Drs. Earl Kine and Brian Bond are presenting at the Saturday morning technical program.

The Southern Virginia Forest Products Initiative

March 13, 2008

Institute for Advanced Learning and Research — Danville, Virginia

Partners and Supporters

- Danville Community College
- Danville Public Schools
- Halifax County Schools
- Morgan Lumber Company
- Pittsylvania County Schools
- Southern Virginia Higher Education Center
- Virginia Forest Products Association
- Virginia Tech – College of Natural Resources and Department of Wood Science and Forest Products

Statement of Purpose

- We seek to develop the human resource to enable a globally competitive and sustainable wood and renewable materials industry in Virginia.
- Our partnership is a collaboration of educational providers and business and industry partners who envision the future pathways to reach the potential of Virginia's human resource as the most important element of our economic and natural resources sustainability.
- We are creating educational pathways to create and retain the workforce of tomorrow in Virginia today - to secure our economic and natural resources sustainability for tomorrow.

Benefits

- Create a seamless educational and career pathway for high school and the adult learner that spans K-12 to the University.
- Respond to the changing workforce needs of the business communities.
- Capitalize on Virginia's natural resources, industrial base, and strengths of our educational providers.
- Contribute to the human resource, natural resources, and economic development of Southern Virginia.
- To capitalize on synergisms among the growing partnership as a key strategy for moving forward.

Who Should Attend

- Human Resource Directors
- Wood Industry CEOs and Senior Leadership
- Higher Education Institutions, Administrative Leadership and Faculty
- Public Education Officials, School System Administration and Career and Technical Education Teachers
- Economic Development Specialists
- Government and Community Leaders

www.woodscience.vt.edu/svfpi/

The Southern Virginia Forest Products Initiative

March 13, 2008

Institute for Advanced Learning and Research — Danville, Virginia

8:30-9:00 a.m.	Registration/Coffee Pastries Fruit
9:00-9:15 a.m.	Welcome: Purpose for the Conference, Why we are here, how we got Here, and where we are going. Conference Hosts and Partners
9:15-10:00 a.m.	Workforce Needs, Recruiting, the Forest Products Industry in Virginia Mike Sexton - Virginia Economic Development Partnership Richmond, Virginia and Why Danville? Bengt Danielsson, President of Swedwood North America
9:45 – 10:00 a.m.	Coffee Break
10:00-11:00 a.m.	Evolution of the Secondary Wood Products Manufacturing Industry Duane Griffith - Manager, Stiles Education Grand Rapids, Michigan and WoodLINKS USA – An Industry-Education Partnership and The Evolution of the Wisconsin WoodLINKS Model Steve Ehle - Wisconsin Coordinator, WoodLINKS USA and Editor, Wood Digest magazine Madison, Wisconsin
11:00-11:30 a.m.	Panel Discussion with Morning Presenters
11:30-12:45 p.m.	Lunch and Luncheon Address: The Evolution and Impact of the West Ottawa High School WoodLINKS USA Program Eric McCourt, WoodLINKS USA Teacher West Ottawa High School Holland, Michigan
1:00-1:30 p.m.	The Advanced Wood Products Laboratory at Georgia Tech Karl Brohammer, Director Atlanta, Georgia
1:30-3:00 p.m.	The Virginia Wood Science and Advanced Wood Products Manufacturing Model – Incorporating the Best National Practices and How We Move Forward as Partners in Virginia Dr. Paul Winistorfer, Professor and Department Head Department of Wood Science and Forest Products College of Natural Resources Virginia Tech – Blacksburg, Virginia Panel Discussion with ALL Presenters
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.	Tour of Swedwood-Danville Plant George Patmore, Plant Manager, Swedwood-Danville Optional for participants but you must pre-register for this tour

Southside Partner Group Visits Department

The Southside partner group met at the Brooks Center on January 14th to continue planning for the March 13th Southern Virginia Forest Products Initiative to be held in Danville, Virginia.



Southside partners get a demonstration of the new corrugated cutting table, recently installed at Brooks and a gift from the International Corrugated Foundation. (L to R) Drs. Bob Smith (College of Natural Resources – VT), Brad Bryant (Pittsylvania County Schools), Gregg Mason (Danville Public Schools), Christy Yaple (Danville Community College), Gerald Sexton (Danville Community College), David Kenealy (Southern Virginia Higher Education Center), Dr. Paul Winistorfer (Wood Science and Forest Products – Virginia Tech), Amy Lammerts (Southern Virginia Higher Education Center), Jeff Arnold (Danville Community College), Ralph Rupert (Wood Science and Forest Products – Center for Unit Load Design), Jesse Paris (Wood Science and Forest Products).

Assistant/Associate Professor – Business Management DEPARTMENT OF WOOD SCIENCE AND FOREST PRODUCTS

The Department of Wood Science and Forest Products at Virginia Tech is seeking applications for the position of assistant/associate professor in the area of forest products business management. We seek a candidate who would develop and apply business management strategies to support domestically competitive and sustainable wood products businesses.

Position Description: The tenure-track position will be at the Assistant/Associate Professor level and will be a 12 month appointment. The position will have responsibilities in engagement/extension programming and industry outreach (75%) and teaching/research (25%).

- The successful candidate is expected to work with the Virginia forest products industry and deliver programming focused on competitiveness of the industry.
- The successful candidate will develop a state, regional and nationally recognized engagement/extension program in forest products business management.
- The successful candidate will develop and deliver Continuing Education ‘short-courses’
- Teaching responsibilities will initially include one undergraduate course in forest products business management.
- The successful candidate will be expected to work directly with the Virginia forest products sector, obtain extramural funding, publish in refereed journals, participate in local, regional and national meetings of professional societies, serve as major professor for graduate students, and serve on graduate committees.
- The position reports administratively to the Head of the department.

Qualifications:

- Candidates must have a Ph.D. in forest products, wood science, marketing, business management, operations management, or closely related field.
- Candidates must be able to communicate effectively with people at all levels in university, industry, associations and private sectors.
- Candidates must demonstrate the ability to build a successful program that is engaged with the industry in their area of expertise as it relates to business management and competitiveness of the industry.
- Candidates at the Associate Professor level must have a demonstrated track record of success in extension or research, including the ability to articulate a coherent extension or research agenda and to identify potential funding sources to support such activities.

Preferred Qualifications: Candidates should have a history of collaboration with colleagues on and off campus, experience reaching out to business, industry and government agencies. Candidates must demonstrate collegiality and the ability to be a good departmental, college, and university citizen.

Application: Application materials should include a current vitae, official transcripts for all degrees at all institutions, the names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of three professional references. The applicant should address his or her interest in the position by preparing a written statement of interest that addresses the matching of personal skills and education with the position description. All materials must be submitted electronically with exception of official transcripts, which must be mailed. Submit on-line at www.jobs.vt.edu, referring to posting No. 071303. Review of candidate files will begin February 1, 2008 and continue until a suitable candidate is identified.

Inquiries:

Dr. Brian Bond, Associate Professor and Search Committee Chair
Department of Wood Science and Forest Products
College of Natural Resources, Virginia Tech
Brooks Forest Products Center (0503)
Blacksburg, VA 2406
Phone 540-231-8752 or email bbond@vt.edu

Virginia Tech is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer and has a strong commitment to the principle of diversity and, in that spirit, seeks a broad spectrum of candidates including women, minorities, veterans, and people with disabilities. Virginia Tech is the recipient of the National Science Foundation ADVANCE Institutional Transformation Award to increase the participation of women in academic science and engineering careers. Individuals with disabilities desiring accommodations in the application process or needing this material in an alternate format should notify Debbie Garnand, Department of Wood Science and Forest Products at 540-231-8853 or email at garnandd@vt.edu.

General Announcements

Builders Continue to Reduce New Housing Production in December

By NAHB (original article found at: http://www.nahb.org/news_details.aspx?newsID=6071)

January 17, 2008 — Single-family housing starts declined 2.9 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 794,000 units in December as home builders continued to ratchet down production in an effort to reduce inventories of new homes on the market, according to newly released data from the U.S. Commerce Department. Meanwhile, a sharp reduction in the volatile multifamily sector contributed to an overall 14.2 percent decline in nationwide housing starts for the month to a one million-unit rate, the lowest since May of 1991.

“Today’s numbers for single-family housing starts are right on the money in terms of what we’ve been forecasting and what our members have told us in recent surveys,” said Brian Catalde, president of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and a home builder from El Segundo, Calif. “Builders are acting appropriately to manage the number of units coming on the market and help restore better balance to the supply-demand equation.”

“The 14.2 percent decline in overall housing starts for the month of December was due primarily to a 40 percent drop-off in the multifamily sector, which tends to display significant month-to-month volatility,” noted NAHB Chief

Economist David Seiders. "On a quarterly basis, multifamily production actually has held up relatively well since the peak in the early part of 2006."

Multifamily housing starts declined 40.3 percent in December to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 212,000. However, average multifamily starts for the final quarter of 2007 held at 321,000 units, above the averages for each of the previous three quarters.

Overall permit issuance, which can be an indicator of future building activity, declined 8.1 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.07 million units in December. Single-family permits declined 10.1 percent to a 692,000-unit rate while multifamily permits were down 4.1 percent to 376,000 units.

"Builders pulled fewer new permits and continued to work down their inventories of unused permits toward the end of last year," Seiders noted. "This is all with an eye to repositioning themselves for later this year, when market conditions should warrant an increase in building activity. NAHB's projected recovery process is contingent upon aggressive monetary stimulus by the Federal Reserve as well as key legislative advances in the areas of FHA reform and GSE oversight reform. A fiscal stimulus package also is warranted to help keep the economy on track in 2008."

Regionally, combined single- and multifamily housing starts were down by double digits in the Northeast (down 25.8 percent), Midwest (down 30.8 percent) and West (down 19.6 percent) for the month. The South fared the best, with only a 3.3 percent reduction in overall housing starts.

Meanwhile, housing permits were down, by lesser margins, in three out of four regions in December. The Midwest posted a 10.6 percent decline, the South posted a 7.8 percent decline, and the West posted an 11.6 percent decline in overall permits for the month, while the Northeast registered a 1.6 percent increase.

On an annual basis, year-end figures from the Commerce Department indicate that overall housing starts declined 24.8 percent in 2007 to 1.35 million units. Single-family starts were down 28.7 percent for the year to 1.05 million units, while multifamily starts were off by 8.4 percent to 308,000 units. Overall permit issuance for new homes and apartments declined 25.2 percent in 2007 to 1.38 million units, with a 29.4 percent decline on the single-family side to 973,000 units and a 12.5 percent decline on the multifamily side to 403,000 units.

Alternative Fuel Demand Boosts Prices of Forest Products

January 4, 2008; Charlotte, NC

Power companies in the South and Pacific Northwest will drive prices for wood fuels higher as new facilities are built to produce an energy alternative to fossil fuels, experts in the forest products industry said Friday.

But the supply of wood chips – a byproduct of lumber production used at pulp mills and power facilities – is dropping as residential construction drastically slows in the weak housing market. The reduced supply has raised prices by almost 10 percent since the third quarter of 2006.

"The supply of wood chips is already low because of the problems with the housing market," said Pete Stewart, president of price information provider Forest2Market. "Increased demand from power facilities will continue to increase prices."

The current increase in demand for wood fuels is coming from forest products companies in the U.S. that have either updated or installed new boilers that run entirely on biomass – plant material such as wood chips, bark and tree limbs. Forest products companies burn wood fuel to power their operations.

Southern forests are facing additional pressure from Europe as utilities overseas, bound by the Kyoto protocol to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, import wood chips to produce power. The weak dollar has made it cheaper for Europe to import wood fuels to satisfy their energy needs.

The U.S. has not signed Kyoto, but individual states are mandating a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from power companies.

In the Pacific Northwest, the dynamics are slightly different. The majority of wood chips are sawmill byproducts used by the region's pulp mills. Generally, wood-fueled boilers are fed hog fuel, which is made of bark and other wood waste unsuitable for pulp production.

“With the startup of new power facilities, the forest industry will have the opportunity to earn additional revenue by collecting forest biomass to supplement residual hog fuel,” said Gordon Culbertson, Forest2Market’s Pacific Northwest region manager. “Many companies are seeking creative strategies to develop biomass as an economical source of fuel.”

Nevertheless, prices for wood chips in the Pacific Northwest are increasing because sawmill production is idled by poor lumber demand. To fill the void, small saw logs that would have otherwise been used in lumber production are being chipped.

The demand for wood fuels throughout the country will continue to grow. U.S. utility companies are planning to build biomass-fueled power facilities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and avoid the rising costs of oil. These facilities should come online in the next two to four years, which will further increase competition for wood chips.

Based in Charlotte, N.C., Forest2Market produces delivered raw material price benchmarks to the forest products industry in the Pacific Northwest and 12 Southern states. Benchmarks for specific species of roundwood, chips, and wood fuel are based entirely on transaction data.

For more information call (704) 357-0110 x 17

Asia skills deficit may force up pay

By Raphael Minder in Hong Kong

Published: January 15 2008 02:00

Growing skills shortages in Asia mean multinational companies operating in the region may, within five years, be forced to pay western-level wages to skilled scientists, IT specialists and engineers, according to the head of one of the world’s largest recruiting companies.

A shift to higher value-added manufacturing in Asia is contributing to skills shortages and resulting in “a massive productivity hit” for many companies investing in the region, Jeff Joerres, chief executive of Manpower, the US staffing company, told the Financial Times.

Many western companies, he said, were “clearly underestimating” the challenge of finding adequate staff for advanced jobs, both in China and in younger manufacturing destinations such as Vietnam and Cambodia. “Companies will shift from facing a technology deficit to a talent deficit. They are trading off one productivity loss for another,” he said.

Legal changes in the Asian labour market also make attracting and retaining staff more difficult, he warned. This month China introduced a labour contract that raises the compensation companies have to provide for dismissing workers. Strikes for higher pay are also becoming more common.

Mr Joerres said: “We are looking at markets where [workers] have choices . . . Those companies that are blind to these changes and continue to forge ahead with antiquated western practices in Asia will really suffer.”

Mr Joerres predicted employers would soon have to pay Asian staff with skills the equivalent of their western counterparts.

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