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2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
30	31	1	2	3	4	5	

INSIDE VT WOOD

Reminder...

Remember to submit department news items by Friday 3 pm 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.

RED ALERT

Debbie is on annual leave the week of July 17th. Cheatham Hall main office phone lines are transferred to Angie. Please let Paul, Audrey or Angie know if you need anything this week while Debbie is off. We wish her a relaxed week and an opportunity to recharge her battery and spend time with her sons.

David Jones is also off the week of June 17th. Exercise care in the use of the woodshop during David's absence.

News From Paul Winistorfer

- I visited Southside again Monday July 10, meeting with all constituents in the continuing discussion about creating a strategic partnership there. I continue to be impressed with the open arm reception and interest in trying to capitalize on mutual strengths and synergies among VT, Southern Virginia Higher Ed Center, Danville Community College, Southside Community College and the Halifax Community School System. I made brief comments about our program and this emerging partnership to the SCHEV Board of Directors, who were in South Boston at the Higher Education Center for their summer board meeting. I will be returning again in early August.
- Amanda Mink and I have authored a draft report titled **“Recruitment and Enrollment in Wood Science and Forest Products: Exploring Potential Relationships within the Virginia Community College and High School Systems”**. This report is attached to the delivery of Inside VT Wood for this week, and also resides on our department intraweb site for your continued access. Please take a few minutes to read through this report. VT kindly provided admissions information from CC and HS programs. I find it quite revealing and strategic on where we should focus our recruiting and partnership efforts off campus. Your comments, suggestions and thoughts on this information are welcome and needed as we line up recruiting strategies for the fall semester.
- I have empowered an ad hoc committee composed of Drs Zink-Sharp, Roman and Rennecker to investigate and explore development of a new major in the department under the umbrella of ‘bioproducts, biomaterials, or other current vernacular’. This committee will investigate and report back to the department as soon as possible. We must be cognizant of mega trends in our discipline and be able to capture strategic opportunities without feeling threatened in our traditional programming and expertise.
- Dean’s Award Nominations Due August 1, 2006 – Please let me know if you would like to nominate one of our excellent staff members or need assistance in preparing a nomination. Debbie, Angie, Rick, Kenny and Carlile have all been past recipients of this prestigious award.
- Annual performance reviews, allocation of budgets and updates with faculty and staff will begin immediately. Angie will be scheduling beginning Monday August 24. I would like to have these completed in a two week time frame.



Café del Verano Hosted by the Department

Join us on Friday July 21 for coffee and pastries at the Brooks Center Lobby – 10am. Take a break from your Friday morning - catch up with department colleagues and students before the summer runs out! Enjoy a cup of java and a pastry.

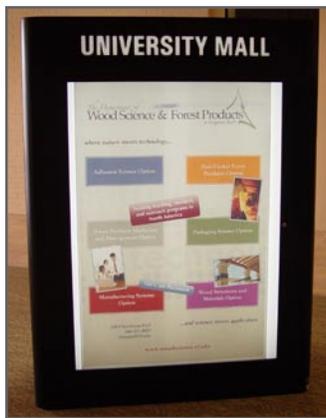
New Department Quad-fold Brochure Available

We have completed one of the four new print pieces we are doing this summer. The general description of the department undergraduate degree options is now complete. This brochure was completed in time for summer orientation of new students. We will be completing 'scholarship opportunities', 'option check sheets' and 'what you will learn' print media before the fall semester begins. All of these will be available as pdf downloads from the website, but we will also distribute print media in strategic locations on campus and around the state. Will Pfeil has been responsible for design and production of these new print materials. Nice job Will!



New Department Stationery Card Available

We have developed a new department stationery card that can be used to send thank you notes, or however you would like to use it for something more personal in our business correspondence. The notecard shows our mission statement, and logos from all Centers and programs in the department. The card is embossed on the front. We also have envelopes available. Check with Debbie if you would like some of these notecards for your personal business use.



New Department Display at University Center Mall

We have the main directory at the University Center Mall rented through September. We have prepared a new display for the directory display case for our undergraduate degree program. Will Pfeil provided design. Thanks to Bonnie Maccubbin for the inaugural edition of a department recruiting poster.

Security Issues at Brooks Forest Products Center

We continue to have security lapses at the Brooks Center. Mostly, entry doors are unlocked at nights and weekends. A number of us have been coming in to check doors and security at night, on weekends and odd times. **WE MUST LOCK ALL ENTRY DOORS AT 5PM AND LEAVE THEM LOCKED. IF YOU ENTER THE BUILDING AFTER HOURS OR ON THE WEEKENDS IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO LOCK DOORS WHILE YOU ARE IN THE BUILDING. IF WE CANNOT RESOLVE ENTRY DOOR ACCESS WE MAY HAVE TO REMOVE KEYS FROM ALL PERSONAL OTHER THAN FACULTY AND CRITICAL STAFF.**

Visit from 2006 Youth Conservation Camp a Success

On July 11th, 60 high school students from the 2006 Youth Conservation Camp came to the Brooks Forest Products center to learn about the contributions of wood science to research in building design and testing, composite materials, and packaging systems. In addition the students were made aware of the career opportunities in the forest products sector related to forest products marketing and management, non-timber forest products, and manufacturing systems.

The students were from all over the state and ranged from 9th to 12th graders. Jongkoo Han, Ralph Rupert, Patrick Rappold, Dan Hindman and Scott Rennekar gave presentations in the labs throughout the Brooks center. Students

saw demonstrations of testing an engineered I-joist that spanned 20 feet, vibration testing of shipping unit, as well as hands on introduction to many of the engineered wood-based composite products, and pilot scale equipment to make the composites.

It was a wonderful opportunity to showcase our achievements to bright and active Virginia high school students interested in natural resources!

College of Natural Resources Welcome Back and State of the College Address

Please reserve the late morning and afternoon of Friday, August 18, (11:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.) for the College's annual Welcome Back Picnic to be held at the University Club and then the whole college Convocation. At this convocation the faculty and staff awards will be presented, Dr. Kelly will give a general "State of the College" message and update people on the things that are happening in the College. The Convocation is scheduled to meet in the front auditorium of the Graduate Life Center beginning at 1:15 p.m.

Graduate Student Orientation August 17

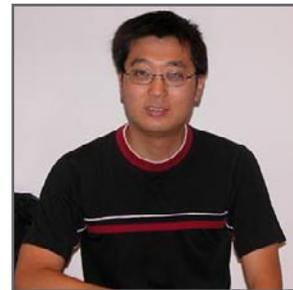
Mark your calendar for the new graduate student orientation August 17 (9am – noon) in room 317B Cheatham. Be sure to direct your new graduate students to this important orientation session.

New Graduate Students Join Department - Professor Frazier's Research Group

Dr. Chip Frazier has two new graduate students that have joined his group in the past few weeks. Welcome to Sudip and Dakai to our department! They are both operating out of room 235 Cheatham Hall.



Mr. Sudip (soo-dip) Chowdhury joins Professor Frazier's group as a new Ph.D. student.



Mr. Dakai (da'-keye or Ren) joins Professor Frazier's group as a new Ph.D. student.



CULD Hosts International Visit

The Center for Unit Load Design hosted an international visit last week. Three gentlemen from France, Jean de Vulliod of Europol, Patrick Corsi of the Institut des Sciences et Techniques de L'Ingenieur d'Angers, and Daniel Bellett of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Arts and Metiers (ENSAM) toured the center to learn about our operations and capabilities.

Room 213 Cheatham Gets Some Love This Summer

Room 213 Cheatham (wood tech lab and classroom) is getting some spic'n'span treatment this summer from Erik Olson. Erik has steel woolled all cabinets, removing pen and pencil marks, is cleaning up the bench tops, cleaning chairs, etc. We must make our learning environments as attractive as possible for our students. Thanks Erik.

USDA AND DOE ANNOUNCE NATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY CONFERENCE FOR OCTOBER

Advancing Renewable Energy: An American Rural Renaissance

WASHINGTON, DC – June 23, 2006, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Mike Johanns and U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Samuel Bodman today announced that the two agencies will co-host a national renewable energy conference to help create partnerships and strategies necessary to accelerate commercialization of renewable energy industries and distribution systems, the crux of President Bush's Advanced Energy Initiative (AEI). The conference, Advancing Renewable Energy: An American Rural Renaissance, is scheduled for October 10-12, 2006, in St. Louis, Missouri.

"Keeping America competitive calls upon us to work together to expand sustainable, market-driven, domestic energy sources," Johanns said. "The October conference will build upon the President's vision for overcoming our energy challenges and help create new wealth opportunities in rural communities."

"Never has reducing our dependence on foreign oil been such a pressing issue," Bodman said. "We have the will and the means to replace significant quantities of foreign oil with homegrown fuel. We are hopeful this conference will identify major impediments and critical pathways to get more domestically grown, renewable energy sources out of the laboratory and into consumers' hands as soon as possible."

Johanns also announced a loan guarantee and grant totaling \$3.75 million for construction and operation of a new biodiesel production facility in Iowa.

From Wall Street to Main Street, investors are seeking to understand potential markets. This conference will focus on elements of President Bush's AEI, specifically biomass, wind and solar research and commercialization. USDA and DOE expect the conference to identify major impediments, review challenges and make recommendations to help accelerate renewable energy technology development; examine key incentives that would help promote certainty and reduce risk for investors and developers in the marketplace; review challenges of developing new distribution systems; and raise public awareness.

USDA and DOE expect conference attendees to cover a broad spectrum of interests, including: agriculture, energy, transportation, financial and investment, federal and state government, and elected officials.

In announcing the biodiesel facility loan and grant, Johanns said the funding recipient is Riksch BioFuels LLC, which will construct a plant near Crawfordsville, Iowa. Twenty-five investors, including farmers and business owners, already have raised over \$3.3 million for the project and will receive \$400,000 from the Iowa Department of Economic Development.

For the past several years, USDA Rural Development has provided renewable energy grants. During FY 2005, 154 grants totaling over \$22 million were awarded. Today's announcement brings the amount of renewable energy loans guaranteed to \$13.35 million. Since the start of the Bush Administration, Rural Development has funded more than \$356 million in renewable energy and energy efficiency ventures through various programs.

The President's AEI requests \$2.1 billion, a 22 percent budget increase at DOE. The AEI aims to reduce America's dependence on foreign oil and increase production of domestically grown fuel, which will in turn, promote U.S. job growth and increase energy security.

Information regarding the October conference will be available on both USDA and DOE's website at www.usda.gov and www.energy.gov.

Wood Science and Forestry—Partners in Progress to a New World



Robert L. Youngs, Thomas E. McLain, and Gregory N. Brown

In his Perspective article [Whither the Future of US Forest Industry—and American Forestry? *Journal of Forestry* 103(7)368–369, 2005] Scott Wallinger notes the difficulties facing the American forest products industry and American forestry as globalization and changes in the nature, image, and economics of the forest resource become increasingly dominant factors. He raises fundamental questions for small forest owners and the forestry professionals and manufacturers who support them. His questioning is timely, but could be extended much more broadly. A critical question relates to how the professional forestry community can most effectively come together to provide the support Wallinger advocates and to which most of us would agree. In the early 1900s, Gifford Pinchot and Bernard Fernow established a federal forest service and sought lasting forest policies that would reverse the decline in American forests. In the process of organizing American forestry there was early recognition that understanding the properties and effective use of wood as well as the science and practice of producing that wood would be extremely important to a growing nation with a voracious wood appetite. Wood technology developed by the US Forest Products Laboratory and many universities was critical in the early 20th century to meeting essential needs for wood, to dramatically reducing its wasteful consumption, and to increasing its economic value. The post-WWII explosion in the demand for wood, and the expansion of the North American industry, also saw the birth and growth of many wood science/forest products education and research programs, largely within university forestry units. SAF accreditation requirements ensured that foresters had some understanding of basic wood science and of the technologies used to convert trees into consumer products. Forest management for fiber and industry economics provided a strong connection between forestry and wood science, and both flourished.

Wood utilization research and education have increased the yield from the logs removed from the forest and contributed significantly to forest and environmental conservation. Innovation as well as economics and environmental concerns closed the teepee burners and created new products such as oriented strandboard, composite beams, and joists that may be manufactured from small-diameter logs and from sawmill residues. New products and markets were identified

for underutilized species. In addition, technologies were developed for recycling wood products, especially in the paper industry. The efficiency of wood use, in terms of amount of output as a proportion of input, had risen from less than 50% early in the century to 70% by 1950 and to 90% by 2000. New technologies, the capability to manufacture new products economically, and recycling have been largely responsible for that increase.

In the past 20 years, as forestry and natural resources university programs have broadened to include new options in forest policy, wood science and forest products utilization topics have been de-emphasized. Many well-known departments, laboratories and academic programs have been eliminated or completely closed. The change drivers are many and include a fundamental shift in public views of forests, as well as a fundamental shift in public support of universities that has dramatically increased student tuition and forced universities to seek gifts and extramural funding to stay afloat. Forestry programs have seen a significant decline in the number of students interested in forest management for timber. Many “forestry” programs have morphed into “natural resource” programs to recognize broader public view of the forest resource. External drivers include a dramatic decline in management of public forests for timber, globalization in the forest sector, corporate mergers/acquisitions, and other megatrends.

There are increasing challenges to maintaining a domestic forestland base with reduced economic incentives for management. The recent Blue Ribbon Panel Report on “America’s Forest Research Policy” from the Forest Research Advisory Council to the Secretary of Agriculture [Apr. 2, 2004] notes that “. . . providing certain future values from the forest requires a viable domestic forest products industry—markets for timber must exist for harvesting to be an option and to sustain incentives for private owners to keep forestlands in forest uses for forest values.” Jerry Franklin and Norm Johnson (2004) argue similar points in their recent article on the downside to declining domestic wood markets. A competitive domestic industry provides necessary economic incentives, but requires a competitive fiber supply, efficient processing, manufacturing innovation, effective marketing, and consumer demand for value-added products. In today’s

global market, new science and technology and a skilled workforce are essential for North American wood products to successfully compete. There is evidence that forestry and wood science programs are expanding in Canada, South America, Asia, and Europe and that some governments are investing heavily in both forestry research and wood research to capture American market share at a time when American investment is declining. The rapid globalization and “flattening” of the world described by Friedman (2005) is creating both new competition and new opportunities to apply new technology and develop new markets for products of the forest that are essential to modern life.

We are intrigued by the challenge Wallinger describes, and which we are convinced to broaden. What is the future of US forest industry and American forestry? Working together, foresters and wood scientists can do much to direct that future toward meeting the many economic, social, environmental, and material needs that have become widely essential in our globalizing world. However, to do so will require stronger partnerships between academic forestry and wood science programs and investment in the future of both. That partnership began American forestry a century ago. That partnership will carry us effectively into the New World of the 21st century.

Literature Cited

- FRANKLIN, J., AND N. JOHNSON. 2004. Forests face new threat: Global market change. *Issues in Science and Technology* 20(4):41–48.
- FRIEDMAN, T. 2005. *The world is flat: A brief history of the 21st century*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, New York, NY.

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