

Inside **VT**
WOOD

A FOLLOW UP ON

WOOD WEEK
2007

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The Department of
Wood Science & Forest Products
at Virginia Tech



Images from Wood Week



Dan Hindman, Tom Hammett, Dan Roethle and Kevin Eberling talk with Fine Woodworking editor, Asa Christiana (L) after his keynote lecture.



Ken Morgan's VT Wood Chevrolet drew much attention on the Drillfield. Burruss Hall provided a nice backdrop for Ken's car! ▼



The Career Fair was a success, with many companies and students in the tent during the day. ▼





Ward Burton autographs a students' T-Shirt at the Career Fair.



Jonah and Soren Winistorfer enjoyed a long lunch hour on the Drillfield at the Career Fair and got to sit in the #4 car and meet Ward Burton.

Ward Burton is presented with a WEI Table Top Bookshelf during the Career Fair and greets some of the department representatives at the Fair.





Wood Enterprise Institute students made a great presentation at the VFPA-VT Conference on Saturday. Shown are Kevin Eberling, Josh Hosen, John Foster and Jesse Paris.

News From Paul Winistorfer...Following on Wood Week

- One week after Wood Week I am still getting positive comments about our week and activities. I want to thank everyone in the department for your support and help during Wood Week. I am very proud of what we accomplished for our program and students last week. Thank you all. We are preparing summary materials for our follow-up discussion as a department.
- Special thanks also to Mr. Ward Burton and to Morgan-McClure Motorsports for coming to our fair. Larry Wysor is the mobile marketing specialist for Morgan-McClure and hauls the #4 State Water Heaters Chevrolet to all public appearances around the nation; we all enjoyed the day with Larry. Ward was most gracious in coming to our event, meeting and greeting students and campus personnel. There was a continuous line of students at Ward's table during the day. Thanks Ward. Thanks also to Carole Inge who traveled with Ward for the day.
- I want to especially thank Ken Morgan, Morgan Lumber Company for bringing the VT Wood Chevrolet to the fair. Ken and his team are great supporters of our program and industry.
- Thanks to the many industry and association participants of the Career Fair. We appreciate you coming to our campus and interacting with our faculty, staff and students. Your presence made the fair possible!
- Thanks to Asa Christiana, editor Fine Woodworking, for delivering his keynote lecture on Tuesday evening. Asa also lectured in several courses Tuesday afternoon and was very well received. Asa has written of our Wood Week activities in his 'editor's blog' on the Fine Woodworking website at www.finewoodworking.com. Check out yet another public presence for our program. Thanks Asa.
- Congratulations to Dr. Audrey Zink-Sharp and the many volunteers who have helped in the past with Wood Magic. Now in its tenth year, Wood Magic has reached over 11,000 children and teachers with the magic of wood!
- Thanks to our many scholarship supporters. We awarded nearly \$60,000 in scholarships last Friday evening at the Inn. What an impressive amount of support we have for our program.
- Thanks also to Randy Bush, Mike Washko and Susan Jennings of the Virginia Forest Products Association who partnered with us in hosting the VFPA-VT Forest Products Technology Conference.
- Finally, I am pleased to inform you that after two years of discussion, the Wood Machinery Manufacturers of America (WMMA) has agreed to bring their scholarship platform to Virginia Tech. Mr. Todd Herzog, chair of the WMMA Scholarship and Education Committee and founder and owner of Accu-Router Inc., and Ms. Molly Pappas, Staff with WMMA from Philadelphia, attended our Career Fair last week. We met last Friday morning

with Dr. Ken Ball, head of Mechanical Engineering. The scholarship platform will be in mechanical engineering for students interested principally in machine design. In full force, this will bring \$28,000 in scholarship support to mechanical engineering. Recipients of the scholarship support must be engaged in Wood Science and Dr. Ball and I are working on what this engagement will actually look like in terms of courses or other requirements of the agreement. This is yet another example of how we can work cooperatively on this campus to strengthen our overall industry. The wood industry needs mechanical engineering students and there are 1,000 undergraduate ME students on the Virginia Tech campus. Let's bring the North American forest products industry to Virginia Tech for all of our academic disciplines! We as a department will be strengthened through these partnerships.

Other News...

- Thanks to the Center for Forest Products Marketing and Management faculty for their recent gifts. The Center faculty have moved to endow a scholarship in the department from the Center. The Center faculty have also moved to make a \$10,000 contribution to the 'Building Our Future' development campaign. Thanks to Director Bob Smith and the Center faculty for your generous contributions from Center resources that will impact our program for a long time into the future! Wow.
- The College supported Fall Focus Career Fair is Friday September 21 in Squires Student Center. There are usually several wood industry companies at the fair. Please drop by and visit with the wood industry companies participating. Also next week is the Engineering Expo and Business Horizons Career Fair. You might be interested in how these events function as we take a close look at Wood Week for the future.
- **Note the date: Tuesday September 25** the Farm Bureau Board of Directors will be on campus and will be visiting the Brooks Center from 1:00 – 3:00 pm, where the bioprocessing/biomaterials research group will hold a poster forum. Faculty from Biological Systems Engineering will participate in the event. Attention to housekeeping is appreciated.

Esker, Roman, and Heinze Receive NSF-DFG Grant

Alan Esker (VT Chemistry), Maren Roman, and Thomas Heinze (Friedrich Schiller University of Jena, Germany) are the recipients of an NSF-DFG grant entitled "Self-Assembling Polysaccharide Polyelectrolytes". The joint program "Cooperative Activities in Chemistry between U.S. and German Investigators" of the NSF and its German counterpart, the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), seeks to enhance opportunities for collaborative activities between U.S. and German investigators. The grant award of \$420,000, not including the DFG budget, will support a 3-year collaboration between Esker, Roman, and Heinze, involving mutual laboratory visits and student exchange.

Sun Grant Initiative funds bioethanol research at Virginia Tech

Virginia Tech faculty members Maren Roman (Wood Science), Alan Esker (Chemistry), and Wolfgang Glasser (Wood Science) have been awarded \$299,904 under the Sun Grant Initiative for a research project on the production of fuel ethanol from lignocellulosic biomass. The Sun Grant Initiative is a federally funded, national program established to enhance national energy security through the development, distribution, and implementation of biobased energy technologies. Building upon the expertise of Roman in cellulose chemistry, Glasser in lignin chemistry, and Esker in surface science, the three-year project will elucidate the mechanisms by which surfactants accelerate the enzymatic hydrolysis of cellulose in the presence of lignin. The results of the study are expected to enable a significant reduction in the cost of bioethanol production by improving the cellulose-to-ethanol conversion efficiency, reducing the amount of enzyme required, and shortening the process time.

College of Natural Resources names Bob Smith associate dean for engagement

By Lynn Davis

BLACKSBURG, Va., September 14, 2007 -- Mike Kelly, dean of Virginia Tech's College of Natural Resources, has appointed Bob Smith of Christiansburg, Va., as the new associate dean for engagement for the college.



Bob Smith

“Bob’s industrial and consumer research efforts and outstanding contributions to the college gave him the edge over our external candidates,” said Kelly.

In his new position, Smith will build on the previous positions he held in the college to expand the college’s Extension program.

“Engagement includes listening and developing collaborative efforts among parties to work on local natural resource issues,” said Smith. “By engaging with the community to understand the natural resource needs, our program will better serve the citizens of the Commonwealth and nation. It is my hope and vision that the engagement process will become increasingly important to all who work in the College of Natural Resources.”

Smith earned his Ph.D. from Virginia Tech in forest products marketing, and has remained a valuable faculty member of the college for over 13 years. Since 1994, Smith has served as a professor and Extension specialist in forest products marketing and management in the Department of Wood Science and Forest Products. He became the Center Director for Forest Products Marketing and Management in 2001. Smith held the interim position before being named associate dean.

The College of Natural Resources at Virginia Tech consistently ranks among the top five programs of its kind in the nation. Faculty members stress both the technical and human elements of natural resources and instill in students a sense of stewardship and land-use ethics. Areas of studies include environmental resource management, fisheries and wildlife sciences, forestry, geospatial and environmental analysis, natural resource recreation, urban forestry, wood science and forest products, geography, and international development.

European Pallet Association visits CULD



Left-Right: Mark White, Mrs. Bowes and Stan Bowes, Reinhard and Mrs. Weissenburger, and Ralph Rupert (rear).

Two members from the European Pallet Association visited with Ralph Rupert and Mark White on August 31, 2007. Mr. Stan Bowes of England, Reinhard Weissenburger of Germany, and their wives, toured the Center for Unit Load Design as part of a twenty day tour of various pallet plants and manufacturers/repairers from South Carolina, across to Memphis, and up to the Great Lakes.

Perkins And Smith Receive Funding For Their Grant Proposal

Brian Perkins and Bob Smith successfully received funding from the Wood Education Resource Center of USDA Forest Service for the project titled: “Benchmarking Factors that Determine Marketing and Firm Performance of Eastern Hardwood Lumber Manufacturers”. The one year grant was for \$64,000 and will serve as Perkins’s PhD. research. The idea evolved after Perkins read some marketing strategy books. The profit impact of marketing strategy was a key book that spurred Perkins to further develop this idea. After an unsuccessful grant application in 2006, we refined and resubmitted and we’re lucky to get funding! The research seeks to discover numerous factors such as strategic, technological, tactical, geographical, and organizational that are related to firm performance in the hope of transferring this knowledge to industry in order to improve firm performance. The research will use multiple measures of firm performance along the lines of the balanced scorecard.

Get a Taste of Timber Frame

Dreaming Creek Timber Framers are currently constructing a large barn and show ring in Wytheville, VA. The site is located approximately 3 miles from Exit 70 on I-81. Anyone interested in visiting the site next week should contact Dr. Hindman, who is going to arrange a van. Dreaming Creek is "one of the top custom timber frame companies in the United States". Located in Powhatan, Virginia, Dreaming Creek has a design studio and beamery in Floyd, Virginia.

Wood and Fiber Online

The SWST board would like to thank Dr. Robert Beauregard, Dr. Zhangjing Chen and members of the Publication Policy Committee for their efforts in initiating the work towards moving to E-publishing for Wood and Fiber Science. This task was considered high priority of the Board for 2006-2007. At our Spring Board meeting held in Orlando on February 24, we decided to move forward with the Committee's recommendation to contract with Metapress to handle the Society's E-publishing needs. The E-publishing for Wood and Fiber Science is now online.

General Announcements

To: Deans, Department Heads, and University Center Directors

From: Mark McNamee (mmcnamee@vt.edu), University Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dear Colleagues:

As PI of our NSF Advance grant, I would like to share with you two reports prepared by members of the AdvanceVT team. The reports are posted on the Advance site. I urge all academic leaders and members of diversity committees and other interested groups to take some time to review these reports as we try to learn how to make our campus community a more inclusive place where all can succeed. They complement aspects of the recently released final report of the Task Force on Race and the Institution (available on the Provost's Office Web site at http://www.provost.vt.edu/race_taskforce.php). We also have an opportunity to see possible changes when we readminister the Advance survey in fall 2008. The authors would be happy to meet with departments or college diversity committees to pursue further conversation about these important issues.

Tonya Saddler, doctoral candidate in educational leadership and policy studies, and Professor Elizabeth Creamer, director of research and assessment for AdvanceVT, have prepared a special analysis by race/ethnicity of the 2005 survey of the tenured and tenure-track faculty. The report makes several points. Overall faculty members are satisfied with their jobs, but less so with salary. Underrepresented faculty (African American and Hispanic) are considerably less satisfied with elements of the university climate than are Asian and Caucasian faculty. Views about the departmental climate are relatively positive, with Hispanic faculty members having slightly less positive views. The majority of Black (67%) and Hispanic (50%) faculty members report hearing, seeing, or reading insensitive or disparaging comments or materials that are offensive to them, and these groups feel there is little accountability at Tech for such behavior. By contrast, white and Asian faculty members are far less aware of offensive comments or materials and are far more likely to believe that Virginia Tech holds people accountable for such behavior. There is a widespread perception that the recruitment of women and minority faculty members is not a top priority at the university - only 10% of Black and 40% of Asian and Hispanic faculty members agree that recruitment of faculty from underrepresented groups is a top priority for the institution. The URL for this report is: http://www.advance.vt.edu/Measuring_Progress/Faculty_Survey_2005/Minority_Survey_Report_Final.pdf

Tonya Smith-Jackson, associate professor of industrial and systems engineering and co-PI of the Advance project, conducted two focused lunch discussions with African American and Latino faculty, both instructional and administrative/professional faculty. Her report shares the candid observations and aspirations of faculty from underrepresented groups that add texture to the survey data. Some of the themes that emerged from those conversations include the importance of pipeline programs as a recruitment tool for underrepresented faculty, the need for cultural competence training at all levels, the need for significant involvement of underrepresented faculty in AdvanceVT transformation efforts, the need for a more inclusive definition of merit and success, and the importance of the Advance effort as a catalyst and indicator of change at the university.

Dr. Smith-Jackson's report is posted at:

http://www.advance.vt.edu/Measuring_Progress/Misc_Reports/Underrepresented_Faculty_Luncheon_Report_2007_Final.pdf

Department of Energy to Make Available up to \$33.8 Million to Support Commercial Production of Cellulosic Biofuels

WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) that will make available up to \$33.8 million to support the development of commercially viable enzymes - a key step to enabling bio-based production of clean, renewable biofuels such as cellulosic ethanol. As part of the President's Twenty in Ten Plan, DOE is pursuing a long-term strategy to support increased availability and cost-effective use of renewable and alternative fuels. Twenty in Ten seeks to displace 20 percent of U.S. gasoline usage by 2017 through diversification of clean energy sources and increased vehicle efficiency.

“These enzyme projects will serve as catalysts to the commercial-scale viability of cellulosic ethanol, a clean source of energy to help meet President Bush's goal of reducing our reliance on oil,” DOE Assistant Secretary Andy Karsner said. “Ethanol from new feed stocks will not only give America more efficient fuel options to help transform our transportation sector, but increasing its use will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”

With a minimum 50 percent industry cost-share, this funding will total nearly \$68 million to further enzyme commercialization efforts. By harnessing the power of enzymes, which are responsible for many of the biochemical processes in nature, biorefineries can more efficiently use cellulosic (non-food) feedstocks for biofuels production. This funding aims to further reduce costs of enzyme system preparations in process-relevant conditions. Since 2000, DOE enzyme development advancements have yielded thirty-fold cost reductions mainly on enzyme production.

This biofuels effort focuses on production from non-food materials and agricultural waste – such as corn stover, switchgrass, and prairie grass. This FOA focuses specifically on systems to hydrolyze and saccharify cellulosic biomass feedstocks. Saccharification enables the biorefining process by breaking down pretreated cellulosic material into more simple sugars, allowing them to be further processed through fermentation and ultimately turned into biofuels such as ethanol. Enzymes developed under this FOA must prove durable and effective in process-relevant conditions.

Letters of intent are due September 10, 2007, and completed applications are due October 30, 2007. View the complete FOA. Projects are expected to begin in Fiscal Year 2008 and continue through Fiscal Year 2011. Funding is subject to Congressional appropriations.

Read more information on President Bush's Twenty in Ten Plan.

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This article found on:

<http://www.energy.gov/news/5340.htm>

<http://smallwoodnews.com/Forum/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=1388>