

2018: A Path Forward

By Dana Lee Cole, Hardwood Federation

In mid-February, the Hardwood Federation's Board of Directors and Hardwood Federation PAC Board of Directors met for their annual winter meetings in Washington D.C.

The Hardwood Federation Boards represent a wide range of industry sectors from across the country. They commit their time, energy and resources to supporting Federation efforts in D.C., and work hard to engage their peers in our efforts as well! The Winter Hardwood Federation Board meeting is a time to refine our policy agenda for the year and to check in with key members of Congress or the Administration on high-level policy issues.

This year, the Federation Boards were pleased to welcome White House Director of Legislative Affairs and Assistant to the President Marc Short to the meeting. Marc shared some of the Trump Administration's upcoming policy priorities and took questions on a number of topics from the Board members present. It was a fascinating and enlightening look into the working of the White House and today's political landscape.

The primary agenda item for the Federation winter meeting is to set the direction and priorities of our efforts in Washington for the year. As this is an election year, there is only a short window of opportunity to make meaningful progress

on important legislative issues. Board members reviewed 2017 advocacy activity and studied the results of the annual Hardwood Federation Priority Policy Survey before considering the appropriate course of action for 2018. The ever, and often swiftly, changing world of politics and policy can shift some of this course, but reviewing our issues with industry experts on the Board at the start of every year is a tremendous help to the Hardwood Federation staff and an efficient way to focus efforts to provide the best possible assistance to the hardwood industry.

In 2018, the top industry issues identified by the survey were log exports to China, regulatory reform, federal forest management and tax reform. Issues closely behind those above were funding government programs that enhance exports, biomass, innovative wood products, and trade. While most of these are not new topics for the Federation, the issue of log exports to China has quickly emerged over the last months and is clearly at the top of mind for many in the industry.

The Federation is considering all sides of the issue and researching what authority the federal government has regarding this issue. We are also closely monitoring recent moves the Trump Administration has taken regarding international trade and what impacts

these actions may have on the situation. The direction to take regarding the above issues is much clearer and we remained focused on achieving long held goals while navigating the ever-changing political waters of D.C.

This year may be a short legislative year, but it will be a busy one. Congress will continue to hear from us why it is important the right decisions are made when considering reform measures in these areas...and why the wrong decisions can devastate our industry. We welcome everyone invested in the industry to join us in our efforts. Please be on the lookout for information regarding the Hardwood Federation September Board Meeting in Washington, D.C., which also includes a day of visits to Capitol Hill.

This year's event will take place September 11-13. RTA Executive Director Jim Gauntt has joined us in the past, and we hope to include representatives of the RTA in this year's event as well! Thank you to the Railway Tie Association and their incredible membership and staff for past, present and future support! ■



Dana Cole is executive director of the Hardwood Federation. The Federation serves as the united voice of the hardwood industry.

Study Shows 95% Of Wooden Pallets Get Recycled

ALEXANDRIA, Va.—Preliminary results of a research project conducted by Virginia Tech on the disposal of wood pallets at landfill sites reveal that 95 percent of wooden pallets are being recycled.

The landfill avoidance study was independently conducted at Virginia Tech over the course of two years. Both municipal and solid waste (MSW) and construction and demolition (C&D) landfill facilities were surveyed to better understand how pallets were being handled at these facilities.

According to the study, the number of pallets entering the landfill reduced by 86

percent, for both MSW and C&D facilities. Environmental awareness, limited space and a desire to be more waste efficient have driven many of these facilities to sort and recover certain types of waste. The overall presence of wood pallets at landfill facilities has also significantly decreased.

"Our industry is thrilled that the data proves the wood packaging sector, more than any other, is closing in on zero-waste," said Larry Howell of Cottondale Wood Products and NWPCA Chair. "Wood pallets are 100 percent recyclable, and the newest research from Virginia Tech shows

that our industry has the highest recovery rate at 95 percent, compared to other prevalent materials."

"Data of this kind had not been collected since 1998," said Dr. Brad Gething, NWPCA Director of Science and Technology Integration. "The wood packaging sector has long been touting their recyclable efforts for decades, and now the data proves it." Wooden pallets get used, reused, and when they are no longer useful, they are converted to mulch, animal bedding or biofuel. ■