Ten years ago, the word “globalization” did not exist. Thomas Friedman, in his New York Times bestseller, *The World is Flat*, highlights the boundary-less marketplace where technology invigorates worldwide trade and levels the playing field. Our industry is being transformed by this global tsunami. China is now the epicenter of furniture production. To paraphrase Charles Darwin, to survive we must adapt.

Our association is not immune to the changing marketplace. NHLA must continuously improve the value of member benefits. Embracing change is the best way to adapt. Your board of managers is addressing today’s hardwood issues. During our recent board meeting, we approved hiring NHLA inspectors for Mexico and China. We initiated a taskforce to create web-based programs including a web-based shopping mall and inventory specials. A safety committee is planning a workshop on how to develop an effective safety program. The inspection services committee approved beta testing of a licensed strap and seal program, and sales code enforcement guidelines.

NHLA must change to meet members’ needs. We must provide enhanced networking opportunities, grade dispute resolution services and educational opportunities. NHLA is influencing government policies through our Federation PAC and by training inspectors through our inspection school. We support the marketing initiatives of the Hardwood Council and the New Oak Partnership.

Status quo is not an option. This is no longer a good ol’ boys association. The NHLA board and officers welcome your input. Through diverse opinions, open dialogue and engaged members, we can build an even stronger association. NHLA committee reports and board minutes are now available to you online. We are committed to being transparent and proactive. You have a voice if you get involved. NHLA has a premiere position in the global hardwood industry and is committed to our bold vision: “Total Member Satisfaction – Resource to Prosperity.”

Jim Howard
Atlanta Hardwood Corp.
www.northlandcorp.com

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There was one reported accident for every five employees in the wood products manufacturing industry last year. And more than 50 percent of those incidents resulted in lost time. If that doesn’t get your attention, how about this? There were 5,700 industry-related deaths in 2004 with 91 percent of those deaths in private industry.

The safety and well-being of employees is a must for every employer and employee supervisor. Then why so many accidents and deaths? Unfortunately, many are directly related to poor safety practices and poor safety training. Did you ever tell an employee to show the new man how to operate that front-end loader? The pressure of making production schedules sometimes overruns safety training. It’s easy to do.

The NHLA Board of Managers has approved a Safety Education Program that is adaptable in every facility and type of operation. The program is designed to guide firms in the development of an overall safety program which will result in compliance with industry standards. Beyond that stage will be safety training for specific pieces of equipment. So, rather than train an operator by the seat of his pants, there will be a systematic plan to teach both the need for and operation of a specific piece of equipment.

The first stage of the program was a workshop during the NHLA Convention to demonstrate a comprehensive safety plan and how best to develop it for a specific site.

We have established a formal Alliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and will draw from OSHA’s resources as the NHLA Safety Education Program matures. We will be able to utilize those resources without the need for an OSHA on-site inspection.

This new program is another value returned to NHLA members. Safety education is the right thing to do.

Paul Houghland, Jr., CAE,
Executive Manager
National Hardwood Lumber Association
www.nbla.com
Every other year, we are bombarded with ads on TV, radio and newspapers placed by candidates for political offices. This is one of those years. And then there are the letters asking for contributions to their campaigns. Actually, our Representatives start fundraising right after their elections. It is a burdensome, yet necessary, process, but we can take advantage of it.

The campaign stumping and fundraising afford us opportunities to gain support for issues which affect small businesses in general and the hardwood industry in particular. The campaigns allow people to personally meet candidates while contributions are a means to help elect friendly candidates.

The Hardwood Federation is the hardwood industry’s political action vehicle to improve results in the United States House of Representatives and Senate. It is a way our industry, collectively, has a recognized voice on Capitol Hill. There are 28 state, regional and national associations making up the Hardwood Federation. The companies represented by these 28 associations total about 10,000. Impressed? How about this: There are 1,000,000 families employed by those companies. That is a big number of votes that elected officials readily acknowledge. You and your company have a strong image in Washington through the Federation.

Our efforts on the national scene are funded by corporate contributions and association contributions to underwrite the administration expenses as well as by personal contributions to the Hardwood Federation PAC which are used to support campaign expenses of candidates.

In September, Hardwood Federation and Hardwood Federation PAC leaders convened in Washington. During the two days we were in town, we met with 104 members of Congress from both sides of the aisle. These meetings are an indication of the Hardwood Federation’s recognition. It is considerable!

We are now active in the development stage of the 2007 Farm Bill. We need to keep legislators aware that grasslands and row crops are not the only agriculture products, and through the Hardwood Federation we are doing just that. I could use a lot of space on the Endangered Species Act, death tax, LEED certification and other legislation priorities.

Suffice to say, much is being done on your behalf. We just all need to recognize our individual responsibilities as citizens along with our corporate responsibilities. The Hardwood Federation and Hardwood Federation PAC are vehicles to help each of us meet those responsibilities. Please remember to contribute to our industry PAC. Contact Betsy Ward in Washington for more information or visit the Hardwood Federation website at www.hardwoodfederation.com.

Jim Howard
Atlanta Hardwood Corp.
www.hardwoodweb.com

“Relationships of trust depend on our willingness to look not only to our own interests, but to the interests of others.”

Peter Farquharson

The Importance of Getting Involved

Our Industry Remains Distinctive

The NHLA Convention in San Antonio was a true-to-life example of why the hardwood lumber industry is unique. For some they represented the third, fourth, fifth, and even sixth generation attending NHLA conventions. Their companies have survived floods, wars, depressions, foreign competitors and the closing of forests under the pretext of conservation.

All the while, the same companies have keenly competed for timber rights and customers. That competition has been, and still is, as intense as one can imagine. The business climate today has forced some changes in the way business is conducted. Handshake deals are not as common as they were 15 to 20 years ago. Sales agreements are more complex. Still, there is an underlying commitment to trust and friendship within the industry. Some of the most fierce competitors could have been seen in San Antonio together at the same dinner table or taking a riverboat ride. It is that feeling of brotherhood which has made the hardwood industry unique. And that aura is still present on many fronts in the industry.

Were it not so, the NHLA Convention would not be a compatible mix of buyers, sellers and service/product suppliers. But it is. It is an enviable relationship mix that is noticed and commented on favorably by convention site hotel personnel and speakers with no previous knowledge of the hardwood industry. It is truly a unique industry.

Paul Houghland, Jr., CAE, Executive Manager
National Hardwood Lumber Association
www.nbla.com
You, no doubt, have heard the expression, “The only thing permanent is change.” What a dull, stagnate existence we would have without change. Without change, none of us would succeed in our businesses or personal growth.

The same holds true for NHLA. We are experiencing change in our elected, appointed, and staff leadership. It is all part of our growth. Included in this issue is a listing of the newly appointed mission leaders, committee chairmen, and committee leaders. This new leadership, building on our existing base, will move NHLA to new heights.

I am certain you are already aware that Mark Barford is now on board as the Executive Manager. It has been a smooth transition at our Memphis headquarters, and this change in staff leadership is part of our continued advancement.

One of my priorities is to have input from NHLA members regarding our programs and benefits. Are there changes you believe NHLA should consider? I welcome your recommendations on these issues. Or, if you prefer, contact one of the committee chairmen. We are in a changing industry and your association will need to adjust to those dynamic changes.

Jim Howard
Atlanta Hardwood Corp.

www.hardwoodweb.com
from Jim Howard, NHLA President . . .

NHLA: You Belong Here

No doubt you’ve heard the expression “a sense of belonging.” This is used in describing one’s family, one’s friends, one’s school, one’s hometown, one’s company. Most of us enjoy and even seek out this “sense of belonging” to something or someone.

Belonging to NHLA is no different. We want to feel NHLA is your association — your extended family, your circle of friends, your alma mater, your hometown.

This issue of Hardwood Matters focuses on NHLA’s membership. The word “diversity” is often heard these days. Without even trying, we have an amazing diversity of members in the association — sawmill owners, big to small, West Coast to East Coast.

To build this “sense of belonging,” both the staff in Memphis and around North America are here to answer your questions about grading, kiln drying, heat treatment, and more. We hope you make friends and business contacts through NHLA who make your business successful. You can even post and read classifieds for free on www.nhla.com.

Accordingly, the Mission Statement begins, “To serve NHLA members in the North American hardwood lumber industry by: . . .” With that decision, the Board reinforced the importance of each member, while acknowledging that most of our efforts also positively affect the industry in general.

Membership is of course the backbone of any organization, and will be of increased importance over the coming years. Sometimes associations fall into the trap of measuring their success by the number of members, rather than looking at the retention rate of current members. How well we serve and maintain the current membership is a better measurement of the association in general, and far more indicative of whether we have any relevance to the North American hardwood industry.

Also in associations, all members are created equal. NHLA’s membership consists of more than 1,600 companies including sawmillers, distributors, shippers, landowners and their downstream users who interest themselves in the hardwood industry. Members are located primarily in the United States and Canada, but a few are scattered all over the world. As the international side of the hardwood industry increases, this worldwide presence will also increase.

NHLA was formed 100 years ago primarily to mediate the rules for the entire industry. Most industrial operations of the day understood they needed to support that effort, and quickly joined the organization. Membership work is a lot harder today as the industry has many choices, but it is more rewarding as the association knows it must earn your support each and every day.

Thanks for your membership and support.

Mark Barford, CAE, Executive Director National Hardwood Lumber Association www.nhla.com

The Importance of Each Member

While completing the rewrite of the NHLA Mission statement several years ago, the Board of Directors was faced with determining how inclusive the association wanted to be. As the single largest hardwood association, many felt our work should benefit the hardwood industry in general, while the majority felt the benefits accrued by the association’s efforts should be primarily for members.

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Thanks for your membership and support.

Mark Barford, CAE, Executive Director National Hardwood Lumber Association www.nhla.com

Inside this Issue...

NHLA membership is diverse, from West Coast software companies (page 20) to a transportation companies (page 6) to Amish-owned or operated sawmills and flooring mills (page 14-17).

The Mission of NHLA

To serve NHLA members in the North American hardwood lumber industry by: maintaining order, structure and ethics in the hardwood lumber market place; providing member services unique to the hardwood lumber industry; assuring a sustainable and available supply of hardwood sawtimber to meet members’ needs; and building positive relationships within the hardwood community.
from Jim Howard, NHLA President . . .

Now for the Good News

Despite all evidence to the contrary, most people believe we are running out of trees … and that our industry is over harvesting. You and I know differently. While there may be some irresponsible forest practices in other parts of the world, North America is a model for sustainable forest management. Illegal logging is a non-issue in the U.S. and Canada, and we have a long-standing tradition of sustainable forest management.

The Forest Fact Book, recently revised and published by NHLA, is chock full of the most recent government and scientific statistics available. The fact is that forest growth has exceeded harvest since the 1940s. Today, North American growth exceeds harvest – by a whopping 47 percent. There are more hardwoods growing than are harvested or available. The fact is that forest growth has exceeded harvest since the tradition of sustainable forest management.

That's the good news. The bad news? We all need a 90-second “elevator speech.” We must continually remind everyone hardwood lumber is a true organic crop. It is a renewable resource which doesn’t require pesticides or a mono-culture to prosper. Trees need only rain, sun and a little help from Mother Nature.

NHLA works to get out the good news through the Hardwood Federation as well as through the Hardwood Forest Foundation and its many educational programs. We should all be promoting hardwood forests as a source of renewable biomass energy and supporting public policy initiatives which provide credits for carbon sequestration. We must tell our story. You can help greatly, in your businesses, communities, and schools – with your own employees and their families. NHLA is happy to provide you with the ammunition – just go to www.nhla.com and request the Forest Fact Book. Science tells us global warming is real. Healthy and productive hardwood forests are part of the solution. Start preaching.

Jim Howard
Atlanta Hardwood Corp.
www.hardwoodsofob.com

from Mark Barford, CAE, Executive Director . . .

Naturally Sustainable

Our hardwood forest resource is best defined by two words: naturally sustainable. Natural sustainability denotes that our hardwood forest resource continues to expand in volume, in a way that does not require human involvement.

As foresters know, the biggest challenge when managing a hardwood stand is to control the amount of regeneration that comes into a forest, not worry about planting more trees! As a matter in fact, the U.S. Forest Service tells us we are growing nearly twice as much hardwood as are harvested from the forest each year. Is that because we are planting so many trees? No, it is because hardwood trees naturally regenerate. If you visit a forest after a timber harvest, many times there are stumps covered with dozens of new trees or “sprouts.” If you have visited abandoned fields after a few years, take a look at all of the new trees growing underneath the brush piles.

In fact, the current success story of the hardwood forestry really owes its history to the horse. Yes, the horse. Before automobiles, when the horse was the primary mode of transportation in this country, millions of acres of forests were cleared to grow hay. When the horse was no longer needed due to the automobile, the fields were abandoned, and transformed naturally into the most beautiful forest in the world, the hardwoods of North America.

So even though we are proud to tell the world that North America has the highest number of graduate foresters of any country in the world, it is really because of a natural phenomenon that our forests are so plentiful. The industry can take credit for using proper care in harvesting, to make sure we care for the forest. They also can take credit for utilizing the tree and the log completely during processing to minimize the number of trees harvested.

But when it comes to sustainability, it is just a natural thing. We just use the industry lucky enough to utilize it every day, and fortunate enough to see some advantage to the elimination of horsepower.

Enjoy the forests forever . . . “Naturally Sustainable”

Mark Barford, CAE, Executive Director
National Hardwood Lumber Association
www.nhla.com

Distinguished Speakers Headline
2007 NHLA Convention

GENERAL COLIN L. POWELL, USA (RET.)
Exclusively Represented by the Washington Speakers Bureau

Before becoming Secretary of State, Powell served as a key aide to the Secretary of Defense and as National Security Advisor to President Reagan. He also served 35 years in the United States Army, rising to the rank of Four-Star General and serving as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (1989 – 1993). During this time he oversaw 28 crises, including the Panama intervention of 1989 and Operation Desert Storm in the victorious 1991 Persian Gulf War.

Born in New York City on April 5, 1937, Powell was raised in the South Bronx. His parents, Luther and Maud Powell, immigrated to the United States from Jamaica. Powell was educated in the New York City public schools. His further academic achievements include a Master of Business Administration degree from George Washington University. Powell is the recipient of numerous U.S. military awards and decorations including the Defense Distinguished Service Medal (with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters), the Army Distinguished Service Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster), Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (with Oak Leaf Cluster), Soldier’s Medal, Bronze Star Medal, and the Purple Heart.

He has received awards from more than two dozen countries, including a French Legion of Honor and an honorary knighthood bestowed by H. M. Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain.

Powell is the Founder of the Colin Powell Policy Center at his alma mater, the City College of New York, and he is helping to raise funds for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial in Washington, DC, and an education center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

General Powell is the author of his best-selling autobiography, My American Journey. General Powell is married to the former Alma Vivian Johnson of Birmingham, AL. The Powell family includes son Michael, daughters Linda and Annemarie, son-in-law Francis, daughter-in-law Jane; grandsons Jeffrey and Bryan; and granddaughter Abigail.

OLIVER NORTH

Oliver L. North is a combat decorated Marine, a No. 1 best-selling author, the founder of a small business, an inventor and holder of three U.S. patents, NRA Life member, a syndicated columnist, and the host of “War Stories” on the FOX News Channel.

Born in San Antonio, TX, North graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland in 1968 and served 22 years as a U.S. Marine. His combat awards include The Silver Star, The Bronze Star for Valor and two Purple Hearts for wounds in action.

Assigned to the National Security Council Staff in the Reagan administration, Lt. Col. North was the United States government’s Counter-Terrorism Coordinator from 1983-1986 and was involved in planning the rescue of medical students on the Island of Grenada and the daring capture of the hijackers of the cruise ship Achille Lauro. After helping plan the U.S. raid on Quadri’s terrorist bases in Libya, North was targeted for assassination by Abu Nidal.

A New York Times best-selling author of 10 books, his most recent novel, The Assassin, was released in paperback in October. North is also the founder of Freedom Alliance, a foundation which provides scholarships for the sons and daughters of service members killed in action.

North has spent months embedded with U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. His award-winning documentary series “War Stories” airs each Sunday night at 8 pm Eastern and Pacific on the FOX News Channel. He claims his greatest accomplishment is being the husband of one, the father of four and the grandfather of eight.
The Need for a Safety Program
by Jim Shephard

In many years we all have seen the industrial pressure cooker apply force in places that we never expected – insurance rates, cost of raw materials, equipment and fuel cost, energy cost, etc. All of this is taking a large bite out of company profits. Then add to this list employee benefits, salaries, training, vacation, and sick days. When does it stop?

The situations we encounter as a consulting firm are almost the same; it’s just different people dealing with the same kind of pressure at different times. We are just lucky – or unlucky – enough to be present when some of the stuff hits the fan, or we are called to aid a client after the fact.

A TRUE STORY
Just last week, walking from one plane to another in the Atlanta airport, I received a call from a client that had lost an employee in a terrible accident involving a piece of heavy equipment.

What are you doing to protect yourself from a similar nightmare?

One can only guess what this gentleman is going through right now. After dealing with the loss, he must then try to console the family. Remember, he must continue working with his employees who have lost a friend or colleague. On top of this, he must work with OSHA.

You may think you know the anxiety he and others at his firm are enduring right now, asking themselves questions such as was the employee properly trained? What was he doing at the time of the accident? Somewhere in the midst of all this the question becomes “What can we do to prevent this terrible thing from happening again?”

Maybe it is time to ask yourself a few very difficult questions. Where are we with our safety programs? Do our programs deal with real-world issues here at our facility? Are we providing the proper tools for our employees to help them complete their tasks in a safe manner?

ANOTHER EXAMPLE
Let me share another tragedy. A young man was hired into what he thought was a well paying position. The employment ad in the paper stated “No experience necessary.” One would assume, “Hey they will train me.” The young gentlemen received his indoctrination training session and immediately he was put to work with an “experienced employee.”

After a couple of hours, he was left alone to continue his work. His training was over. Now he was well on his way to disaster. The so-called “experienced employee” had only been on the job three weeks himself.

Not being told he had to wear safety glasses, the new hire was cutting bands with a pair of tin snips. (Yes, the wrong tool for the job.) Within a matter of hours, he had lost his right eye.

Some would say it was his fault; he should have known better. If polled, I’m sure we would get different opinions, but it boils down to this: Who will pay in the long run?

ASK YOURSELF
Are your employee training programs real world? Are the site and task specific? How do you evaluate your employees to ensure they have retained the information?

On the other hand, after a training session can you see any positive results in your work force concerning equipment operation, reductions in equipment maintenance, or product damage?

Jim L. Shephard spoke at the 2006 NHLA Annual Convention.

Jim L. Shephard
Shepherd’s Industrial Training Systems, Inc.
PO Box 341033
Barlett, TN 38184-1033
(901) 582-9507
Fax: (901) 582-2811
E-mail: jimshephard@shephardsystems.com
from Jim Howard, NHLA President . . .

Working Smarter

We’d all love a magic wand that we could wave and solve all the problems facing the industry. (Actually, what some of us would really love is a way to mass-produce magic wands . . . out of red oak!) There is no magic wand, however. As one contributor to this issue on “Advances in Sawmill Technology” notes, the costs of labor and of raw materials are largely beyond our control. So is the final price our products bring. These things are dictated by the market. The easiest way to increase our profits is to squeeze more – more quality and more quantity – out of our raw materials.

Likewise, plenty of hardwood lumber companies and resource centers have been well-received, “Technology Transfer Tours” at NHLA member sites around North America. These have been well-received, and imitating them.

Accordingly, NHLA has launched “Technology Transfer Tours” at NHLA member sites around North America. These have been well-received, serving as regional “mini-meetings” of NHLA as well as a chance for our members to see the latest technology in action.

Another new project from NHLA is “Remaining Competitive in Hardwood” seminars like the one held in March at the Wood Education and Resource Center (WERC) in Princeton, WV. The NHLA Nominating Committee invites recommendations of individuals to be considered for potential candidates to serve on the NHLA Board of Managers. The Board meets two times each year. Additional meetings may be held via teleconference. Recommendations, in writing, should be forwarded to: Orn Gutmadsson, Sr., Chairman Nominating Committee NHLA PO Box 34518 Memphis, TN 38184-0518

That theme echoes through this issue of *Hardwood Matters*, from several contributors. One successful company says the idea is to get the most out of each and every log. We have to do a better job with what we have. It isn’t about working harder. This industry already does that! It’s about working smarter.

Jim Howard
Atlanta Hardwood Corp.
www.hardwoodweb.com

from Mark Barford, CAE, Executive Director . . .

Finding Out What Works

In speaking to industry groups and giving interviews, I’ve described these as hard times in the hardwood lumber industry. At the very least, they are challenging times. Challenges, however, bring opportunities. It’s a truism that some fortunes were made during the Depression. The challenge is finding them, finding out what they’re doing right, and imitating them.

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Potential Advantages of Curve Sawing Non-Straight Hardwood Logs

By: Phil Araman,
USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station, Blacksburg, VA
Brian Bond, Mark White and Peter Hamner,
Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, VA

Curve sawing is not new to the softwood industry. Softwood sawmill managers think about how fast they can push logs through their sawmill to maximize the yield of 1x and 2x lumber. Curve sawing helps mills maximize yield when sawing non-straight logs.

Hardwood sawmill managers don’t want to push logs through their sawmills, because they want to maximize lumber value and not volume yield. Value maximization requires decisions at the heading, resaws, edgers, and trimmers. Poor decisions equal losses in revenue. We will discuss a way to do both on non-straight logs.

USDA Forest Service and Virginia Tech scientists have been investigating potential benefits of processing non-straight hardwood logs and smaller diameter roundwood through curve sawing systems similar to those used by softwood mills, also known as “sweep sawing.” The lumber and cants are sawn parallel to the sweep or path of the logs.


In “Effect of curve sawing small diameter hardwood sawlogs on pallet part yields” by P. C. Hamner, M. S. White and P. Araman, to be published in the Forest Products Journal, we compared the performance of curve and straight sawing of small diameter low-grade hardwood logs with three levels of sweep. These were long pulp quality curved logs. We used a gang frame saw for the curve sawing of the hardwood logs at a softwood sawmill. The logs went through a circle scrag heading prior to the gang frame saw. Some extreme sweep logs did not process through the scrag. The frame saw is slow, but allows an operator to cut the log following most of the sweep. We had some logs with double sweep. This test was very encouraging.

Continued on page 10
Welcome to the NHLA Annual Report edition of
Hardwood Matters, and what a year it has been.
The annual report is based on the NHLA fiscal
year, which runs the March 1 to February 28. This
last year saw some significant changes at NHLA,
including a new Executive Director for the first
time in ten years. Mark Barford has brought his
energy and passion for the hardwood community
to NHLA, and the staff has responded. Members
should be seeing and hearing from NHLA more
often, and our staff is always there to help when
you have a question. Communication is a two-way
street.

One of the cornerstones of my vision as
president is complete transparency in the actions
of NHLA and the board. Ultimately, your dues
pay for or subsidize almost everything NHLA
does. Members should know what the board and
the committees are accomplishing. This magazine
includes a report on the major actions taken by
the Board of Managers at the 2007 Spring Board
Conference. Some of those decisions will affect
NHLA for years to come. As part of the push for
greater transparency, I have also directed the staff
to create a section of the website devoted to board
business, including posting minutes from board
and committee minutes. This feature should be
available very soon.

Every organization must change, adapt, and
evolve in order to stay fresh and relevant. Because
of the solid foundation and outstanding tradition
established by previous leaders, NHLA is in place
to respond to the rapid changes taking place in
the hardwood industry. Any review of the past
year should also preview the upcoming year. In
the next annual report, I hope we can talk about
the successes of NHLA and the hardwood industry.
Next year, look for reports on the achievements
of the NHLA lumber inspector in China, the results
of the new communications plan and overseas
branding, and the continued efforts of NHLA in
our mission to represent and promote the North
American hardwood community.

I believe NHLA can elevate its educational
programs and convention experience; improve
communications and board transparency; build
strategic partnerships with affiliated associations
and universities; change the good ol’ boy
perception; build web-based programs such as
safety modules that can be easily downloaded; and
reinvigorate NHLA inspection services.

With your active involvement, I am confident
NHLA will grow even stronger in the years ahead.
NHLA has a premier position in the global hardwood
industry and is committed to our bold vision, “total
member satisfaction – resource to prosperity”.

Jim Howard
NHLA President
Atlanta Hardwood Corp.
www.hardwoodweb.com

Welcome to NHLA’s year in review issue... in
June. Perhaps that seems odd, but like many of
your companies, our fiscal year isn’t the same as
the calendar year. The Association’s fiscal year ends
Feb. 28, so most of our projects and activities run
on that schedule.

The 2006-2007 year ended on a very positive
note on the financial side. Most importantly, we
ended up in the black due to a number of successful
projects, including a well-attended, well-sponsored
Annual Convention and the expansion of the Heat
Treatment Auditing program. The year has some
unusual expenses with staffing changes, and extra
support for the work of the Hardwood Federation,
so ending up with a small surplus strengthened our
reserves for what may be some more challenging
times ahead.

On the membership side, like all associations,
we have struggled. Overall, our membership
numbers are good. The biggest news is the change
in the types of members. With further industry
consolidation, and some of our longtime members
closing, our mix of members continues to change.
Tough times, however, make involvement in the
association all the more crucial, so we look forward
to increased involvement with our members and
their steady support.

This year saw the reinvention of the Public
Affairs efforts of NHLA, and the greatly improved
communications, such as Hardwood Matters. This
is just the beginning, as the Board has reaffirmed
that one of our main missions is not only to talk to
our members but to listen to them. The board also
approved a communications consultant to assist us
in designing some new ways to talk – and listen
– to you. For example, ever heard of a webinar? Me
either! A webinar is a seminar available only on the
web. Keep watching and listening.

We hope you enjoy this look at last year and,
like us, begin to feel excited about new projects
we’ve launched for 2007-2008, which, by the way,
will end on Feb. 29 because 2008 is a leap year.
This gives NHLA one full extra day to serve you,
and that may cause us to expand the year-in-review
issue next year!

Mark Barford, CAE
Executive Director
National Hardwood Lumber Association
www.nhla.com
Here at NHLA’s offices, we’re busy gearing up for the biggest gathering the North American hardwood lumber community knows, the NHLA Annual Convention and Exhibitor Showcase. Many of you — we hope all of you — are doing the same!

You’ve already heard Colin Powell and Oliver North will be keynote speakers. We plan for this to be possibly the biggest and definitely the best NHLA convention ever.

By now, you also should have received your registration brochure in the mail. This year’s design doubles very nicely as a poster for your office or employee break room. It should get people in your company talking about going to DC in September!

You can also register on the Association’s website, www.nhla.com.

Registration for the Hilton Washington may be made by calling 1-800-HILTONS or 202-483-3000. To receive the group rate, you need to mentioning the group code “HLA.” The hotel is just minutes from shopping and restaurants. Few cities offer as many things to do as our nation’s capitol!

With speakers like these, NHLA has contracted with an outside security company. No one — including me! — will be admitted to any NHLA function without wearing a 2007 name badge! We trust you will all understand.

In listening to our members on a daily basis, we’re well aware these are tough times in the industry. The NHLA convention, however, isn’t a luxury you can do without. It’s a place to meet new customers and suppliers and to learn new ideas about how to improve your bottom line. You can’t afford to miss it!

Mark Barford, CAE
Executive Director
National Hardwood Lumber Association
www.nhla.com

Correction: In the June issue of Hardwood Matters, revenues were reported incorrectly as $4,066,228. The correct amount is $4,651,521. Expenditures were reported correctly at $4,431,310. The issue of Hardwood Matters at www.nhla.com has been corrected to reflect this.
Just how small has the world of hardwood become? The hardwood lumber you sell today is likely to cross an ocean before it returns as furniture, cabinets, shutters, flooring, stair parts or other finished wooden products.

The rise of the global marketplace has radically altered the hardwood industry in recent years. No other development has influenced so much the way we do business. The hardwood industry is being transformed before our eyes by instant information, foreign competition and quicker, cheaper transportation. Many lumber companies find exporting to be their only area of growth. Others not yet exporting are asking where or how to take that first step.

Finding a niche among a growing number of global competitors might dampen one’s desire to ship into other countries. For many, however, there may be no better way to improve the bottom line than to expand into what has morphed from “the great unknown” into the new global marketplace that is now so much a part of everyday life.

If you doubt your ability to leap into the global marketplace, think again. Today, being an exporter is easier and more doable than ever, even for small companies. Exporting is no longer limited to large corporations. For example, more and more family-owned businesses are succeeding in the global market. Several government agencies are offering practical guidance — it’s their job! Better still, you can help yourself a lot by talking with fellow NHALA members already thriving in the export business.

Over the next year, NHALA will be even more active in the global hardwood industry. As we get ready for the 2007 Convention, keep in mind that work has already begun toward a special focus on global trade during the 2008 Convention in San Francisco. This September, Mark Horne, NHALA’s Chief Inspector and Mark Barford are attending an international conference on industry standards held in Lviv, Ukraine. We are currently conducting a search for an NHALA inspector in China. I believe this industry has a golden opportunity to promote our sustainable resource. North America is already the largest hardwood producer. According to AHEC, we presently enjoy 25 percent of the worldwide market share. We need to protect the NHALA brand overseas and to build on our strong foundation. Let the French sell wine; let the Chinese sell shoes.

We sell the best in hardwood.

Jim Howard
NHALA President
Atlanta Hardwood Corp.
www.hardwoodweb.com

It’s a cliche, but the world is changing — the way in which people interact, communicate and conduct business. Every day, it seems, the world becomes a smaller place. This shrinking means an expanding international market, a change which many find challenging.

While change is never easy, it provides opportunities for companies to grow, even revolutionize, the way they produce and market their goods. By remaining cooperative, communicative and open-minded, the industry as a whole will be able to get through difficult times and lay a foundation for a brighter future.

Increased involvement by our members in the life and work of the Association will prove extremely helpful in staying up-to-date on the latest technologies and market trends and taking full advantage of the networking opportunities afforded by NHALA, especially the Annual Convention and Exhibit Showcase.

Global trade presents challenges, but it also poses a wonderful opportunity for this industry. Rather than complain about North America being flooded with imports, let’s flood the world with our exports. North American products enjoy an unmatched reputation for quality and for the best practices in the industry. Let’s take full advantage of that!

Some may consider exporting to be a last resort, or an endeavor only applicable to larger companies. Exporting, however, offers a competitive edge to smaller companies. There are many examples of small, family-owned businesses successfully entering into healthy partnerships with their foreign counterparts.

Simply put, change is upon us, with unlimited possibilities. The reality of our situation, as a unified community of hardwood lumber manufacturers, shows that we should be open to the prospect of global trade and welcome the opportunities inherent in this shift.

Mark Barford, CAE
Executive Director
National Hardwood Lumber Association
www.nhla.com
Family businesses are the foundation of the hardwood lumber industry. The overwhelming majority of hardwood lumber companies, and thus of NHLA's membership, are family businesses. This heritage and tradition is a source of great strength and pride to us.

Family businesses, however, have unique challenges: maintaining one family control, staying viable from one generation to the next, family politics and exit strategies to name a few. Without clear communication and careful planning, heirs may themselves be ill-prepared to run a business. They may find themselves saddled with estate taxes they did not expect. Finally, families may be torn apart — and businesses lost — during these critical transitions.

This issue of Hardwood Matters deals with family businesses, specifically, with the issue of succession planning. We're not recommending or endorsing any of the ideas or the contributors. We do hope it at least gets you to talking and thinking about the future of your business. How have you prepared?

Of course, this issue hopefully will arrive as you are walking out the door to the NHLA Convention and Exhibitor Showcase in Washington, DC, the premier “family reunion” of the hardwood lumber industry!

Jim Howard
NHLA President
Atlanta Hardwood Corp.
www.hardwoodweb.com

The family business is a microcosm — a miniature version — of the industry. The challenges faced by the family business mirror those faced by the industry. Dealing with those challenges, therefore, may be the best thing not for the business concerned but for the industry as a whole.

How does this work? As one of the contributing writers in this issue notes, the “skill set” which made the founding generation of a business successful may or may not be the skill set required today. The world is a little bit more complicated with each passing year, and while many of us could ignore things like global markets and new technologies until fairly recently, it’s impossible to do so any longer. The “dreaded son-in-law,” as a contributor called him, may have a new “skill set” that needs to be tapped!

When we plan a smooth transition to the next generation, bringing in qualified, well-prepared successors, new skill sets will be pressed into service. New ideas may end up being explored. Your business and the industry as a whole can only benefit! After all, the industry is only as healthy as the companies that compose it!

Mark Barford, CAE
Executive Director
National Hardwood Lumber Association
www.nhla.com
Did you miss the hardwood event of the year? The Washington, D.C. NHLA Convention brought together more than 1000 of the industry’s decision makers and opinion leaders. Besides being fun and educational, it was quite a show. It’s safe to say General Colin L. Powell, USA (Ret.) and Colonel Oliver North both were big hits as keynote speakers as expected, far better than my own talk.

General Powell, who enthralled the crowd of more than 800 packed into Opening Session, brought a personal perspective with his views on a rapidly changing world. While obviously not an expert in the forest products industry, there are probably few people who have a firmer grasp of the world’s economic and political future.

“The hardwood industry is not immune to the rapid changes in the world,” General Powell said. Rather than shying away from change, the tactic embraced by the now defunct Soviet Union, the hardwood industry can succeed and even prosper by embracing that change.

Colonel North echoed many of the same themes but with a different focus. The world’s economic balance is shifting from America and Europe to America and Asia. He also reminded us to hire returning servicemen and women. What better way to find highly qualified employees?

No one would deny these are challenging times, but the “Legends of Lumber,” who were the surprise hit of the convention, had many words of wisdom for all of us. They urged that we modernize; be leaner, more efficient; use technology. Compete globally. Despite tough economic times, all of the legendary leaders shared optimism about the future.

Your association is embracing change, looking for more ways to bring value to our members. In 2008, we will be upgrading our website, adding educational webinars and promoting the NHLA grades in China.

Over and over during convention, the question was heard “How can NHLA top this?” Well, the Association is already working on next year’s convention in San Francisco, the “Global Gathering of the Hardwood Community.”

Instead of fearing tomorrow, we are leading change. NHLA can be your resource to prosperity.

Jim Howard
NHLA President
Atlanta Hardwood Corp.
www.hardwoodweb.com
Without a doubt, teaching is one of the most important and satisfying of professions. I have an enormous respect for teachers and what they do. As a slow learner, my childhood teachers had tremendous patience and tenacity. It may sound corny or clichéd, but everything we learn, we owe to some teacher, somewhere, even if not in a formal or classroom setting. For many of us, a coach, our parents, a pastor, a mentor are all teachers.

NHLA is a teacher, too. You may not think of the Association as such, but that is exactly what it is. First and foremost, NHLA makes the Rules, but once we make them, we teach about them and how to use them. It’s at the core of who we are and what we do.

Obviously, the flagship of NHLA’s educational efforts is the NHLA Inspection School in Memphis, Tenn. Young – and some not so young – men and women go on to rewarding careers in all aspects of the hardwood lumber industry after only weeks in Memphis. Of its almost 7,000 graduates, many have gone on to become the leaders of this industry. This is amazing, if you stop and think about it. I can’t imagine any other educational institution having such an impact on an entire industry as the NHLA Inspection School has on the hardwood lumber industry.

The School is just the tip of the iceberg. Besides providing courses on subjects such as lumber grading, remanufacturing, and kiln drying, NHLA inspectors offer plenty of informal training in the course of doing their jobs. Teaching the NHLA Rules is their job!

The School continues to be a success, but NHLA’s staff, the educational committee and its new mission leader, Rick Ekstein of Weston Forest Group, are evaluating our educational programs. Like every good teacher, NHLA is committed to doing an even better job, and enhancing our educational offerings. With the industry changing and technology evolving even faster, there are more educational options than ever available to us. Spanish grading courses? Lumber sales and purchasing courses? Industry specific courses? Courses taught nearer to members’ facilities? Courses taught via the Internet? It all comes down to what our members tell us they want from us, and what will serve their needs. We welcome your ideas for enhancing our educational offerings.

Jim Howard
NHLA President
Atlanta Hardwood Corp.
www.hardwoodweb.com
You’ve been hearing some talk lately about NHLA going global and having more of an international presence. This really is nothing new. We sometimes forget that NHLA has been an international organization since its founding. With more than 160 Canadian members, NHLA has quite a head start on going global.

For Canadian firms, almost all trade is international, including trade with the U.S., their largest trading partner. Trade regulations, custom requirements, the need to translate into different languages, and fluctuating currency values — these might be new challenges for many of us, but for Canadian lumbermen, it’s business as usual.

Acknowledging that the world grows smaller every day, the NHLA board is focused on protecting the NHLA brand overseas and promoting our sustainable resource. Our strategic direction is to be the voice of the North American hardwood lumber industry in Vietnam, South Africa, Dubai, Italy, or wherever North American hardwoods are sold. We hope to expand our strong partnership with AHEC promoting North American hardwoods internationally.

We’ve been teaching the grading rules overseas for more than a decade. Today, the NHLA rules are translated into Mandarin Chinese, French, and Spanish. Recently, NHLA hired a public relations consultant based in Singapore to help NHLA tell our story to the Asian trade press. This coming year, we intend to partner with a Chinese university to teach the 14-week grading curriculum.

The NHLA board believes an educated customer is a better customer. Our 2008 convention in San Francisco is being promoted overseas as “the global gathering of the hardwood community.” We hope to invite many of our international friends to attend. Going global is not a choice we take lightly, yet we believe being visionary requires building the NHLA brand overseas for future generations of lumbermen. Our roots are in North America, yet our lumber is sold globally.

Jim Howard
NHLA President
Atlanta Hardwood Corp.
www.hardwoodweb.com
Democracy usually involves many diverse, conflicting voices. That’s a good thing, and those of us in the forest industry simply have to work to make sure our voice is one of those heard loud and clear.

We’re not politicians and don’t want to be. Our focus is on running our businesses — on making a living for ourselves, our families, and our employees, but life isn’t always simple. In one form or another, government intrudes in the form of taxes, regulations, and legislation.

Even the most well-intentioned of laws can have unintended consequences. Ask anyone who has discovered an endangered species on his or her property, or who has tried to hang on to his or her family’s business in the face of unexpected estate taxes.

What can we do? As citizens of a free, democratic country, we can get involved and make a difference. We can learn about the issues, vote, and follow-up by communicating with our elected officials.

Now what are we doing as an association? In addition to setting the rules and providing training in them, NHLA is the industry’s voice — your and my voice — on issues that can impact the bottom line, such as LEED building standards and making estate tax repeal permanent. NHLA does this directly by meeting with public officials in Washington, as well as indirectly through the Hardwood Federation and Hardwood Federation PAC.

We are steadily getting our message out that forests are a renewable, sustainable resource, and thankfully our voice is increasingly being heard.

Jim Howard
NHLA President
Atlanta Hardwood Corp.
www.hardwoodweb.com
Green Spin: Public Perception Doesn’t Equal Science

The American public believes that we are depleting our hardwood forests, that the spotted owl doesn’t live in second growth forests, and that ethanol is a more environmentally-friendly substitute for gasoline. Unfortunately, public perception is often distorted by green propaganda. Given the environmental sensationalist reporting, most Americans seem convinced that we are rapidly running out of forests. However, a recent government study by the USDA Forest Service demonstrates that forestland in the US today is just as abundant as it was 100 years ago. There are 750 million acres of forestland in the US, about the same as in 1907.

Another public assumption is that ethanol is a more environmentally-friendly fuel. Unfortunately, the green spin outweighs the science. The ink isn’t even dry on the latest energy bill, with its lavish subsidies and tax credits for ethanol. Yet a recent editorial in Scientific American states “ethanol worse than gasoline – oil companies now officially green.” Several recent studies highlight that corn ethanol is not as efficient energy-wise or green-wise as gasoline. According to Tim Searchinger, an agricultural expert at Princeton University, the sobering news about corn and soy ethanol is that “prior analysis made a mega accounting error. There’s a huge imbalance between the carbon loss by plowing up a hectare (2.47 acres) of forests or grasslands and the benefit you get from biofuels.” Others have observed that when the hidden costs of land conversion are included, “the greenhouse gas emissions from corn ethanol over the next 30 years will be twice as high as the regular gasoline.” Just add corn ethanol to the latest environmental myth. Good intentions often just exacerbate the problem they’re supposed to solve.

Fear of global warming is fueling today’s green gold rush; yet the cost of going green is often under-calculated. Solar energy proponents seem to ignore the significant time period to pay back the energy invested in making solar panels (approximately 7-10 years). The payoff will reportedly take 167 years for our using ethanol in reducing greenhouse gas emission. The US Green Building Council (USGBC) has established the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) criteria, which certifies architectural green buildings. Yet USGBC lacks a comprehensive system for life cycle assessment in rewarding credits to environmental buildings. Thus the environmental impact of using renewable wood versus inorganic materials such as concrete or steel isn’t fully considered. According to a recent Yale report (“Accessing USGBC’s Policy Option for Forest Certification”), legally sustainable, harvested wood should be credited in LEED. This well-respected report recommends that all bio-based materials be given credit, not just rapidly renewable products such as bamboo flooring. To me, this seems logical. How can concrete, steel, or carpet be more environmentally-friendly than wood?

For thousands of years, wood was the answer for mankind’s energy needs. Perhaps a 21st century twist on wood use could revolve around cellulosic biofuel. Cellulosic biofuels burn cleaner than corn-based ethanol and do not have the unintended consequence of raising food prices and creating shortages. Today, corn ethanol enjoys a 51 cents per gallon subsidy. NHLA and the Hardwood Federation instead support research incentives for cellulosic energy.

The trick to successfully producing cellulosic biofuel is unlocking the sugar molecule from the lignin. An energy company, Bluefire, estimates 70% of the US oil imports could be offset by utilizing plant-based wastes including timber harvesting remnants, corn stover, and other plants-based waste often destined for landfills. Despite the technological hurdles, the first cellulosic biorefinery in the US is being built by Range Fuels in Soperton, GA. Bluefire is already operating a prototype plant utilizing wood waste in Japan. And Choren, a biofuel firm in Germany, has $150 million of backing from Shell Oil, Volkswagen, and Daimler.

Although we might be a decade away from commercializing cellulosic ethanol, wood could be an answer to America’s thirst for gasoline independence. Second generation biofuels would not require food crops as an energy source. Biomass energy is already the second most widely used form of renewable energy. Many of us already use wood waste in our boiler systems. Dr. Patrick Moore, co-founder of Greenpeace, has prophesized for years that “trees are the answer.” Maybe green science will some day equal environmental reality. I am reminded of the Greek proverb, which notes that “a society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they know they shall never sit.” Both our challenge and opportunity are to get our message across to American public, its legislatures, and decision makers. If we do not try to convey this message, then many will continue to fall for the siren song of green propaganda voiced by those more motivated by their own short term interests than in the lasting impact of long term, sustainable solutions such as we offer.

Jim Howard, President
Atlanta Hardwood Corp.
www.hardwoodweb.com

A Message From The President
Trying times but opportunity on the horizon

Our company recently held its annual board meeting and the mega issue highlighted was, “Is our industry facing a normal business cycle or fundamental change?” Perhaps it’s a combination of both. According to the Hardwood Market Report annual report, eastern hardwood production in 2007 fell below ten million board feet of production for the first time since 1985. Some hardwood grade and species pricing are also seeing ten year historical lows. Export lumber shipments were down, but log exports increased. The United States has become the number one exporter of logs and a net importer of forest products. Despite being an ardent proponent of free trade, I am concerned about the long-term ramifications facing our industry. For several generations, my family was cotton farmers in south Georgia. We still grow some cotton on the family farm, but unlike 50 years ago, few value-added cotton manufacturers are found in any southern towns. The US textile industry, along with hosiery mills and the garment industry, are virtually gone. Will our industry share the same fate? Western European sawmills have only been niche players for decades. For the most part, the last fifteen years has been a period of unprecedented growth in North America. Our industry enjoyed the good times. Until this recent downturn, we participated in the largest housing boom since the Second World War. Fifteen years ago, the hardwood industry was predominantly a domestic industry. Now, in an unprecedented period of rapid globalization, all hardwood market sectors except for railroad ties have lost market share to imports. Yet despite the lowest consumer confidence in 35 years, I do believe that we have an overall resilient economy. Due to new household formation, a Harvard study just released predicts the next decade will be the best one ever for housing growth. Remodeling is expected to increase dramatically and equal new construction expenditures by 2015.

How can we adapt to embrace the changing economy? Utilize the resources within the industry. For me, NHLA is a tremendous resource for networking and brainstorming ideas. Hardwood Matters Magazine is a forum to discuss our industry’s future, share ideas and learn from one another. The CEO Corner in this edition discusses ways to attract and keep good employees and thus reduce turn over and help with the bottom line. A feature story on the United Arab Emirates talks about the emerging market opportunities for hardwoods in the Middle East. And don’t forget this September Ted Rossi and his task force are hosting an NHLA Summit on certification. Down markets do foster clarity; eliminate dead wood and focus on reducing expenses.

Don’t let market depression upset your vacation plans. Enjoy a summer getaway. The markets will improve in time. The challenge for all of us is finding new ways to create customer value in adapting to the stronger, but different, future marketplace.

Jim Howard, President
Atlanta Hardwood Corp.
www.hardwoodweb.com
Building on a proud legacy

In early June, Mark Barford, Executive Director sent out an email to all members announcing and describing the re-branding that NHLA will soon undertake.

Throughout NHLA’s 110 years existence, the industry and NHLA have undergone considerable and constant change. One of the attributes of any successful organization is its ability to not only respond to change but to anticipate future developments. In just the last decade, our industry has seen transformational change, especially with the massive relocation of furniture factories and the increasingly green revolution environmentalism. Over the past 18 months, NHLA’s leadership has been developing a new communications and outreach strategy to address current challenges and future opportunities. In August of 2008, NHLA will be turning over a new leaf.

NHLA’s re-branding is comprehensive and includes a refocus of services and programs, plus a new logo. The strategic review process to get to this point has been long and deliberative. In 2006, the NHLA Board created a Communications Committee and empowered a Communications Consultant Task Force. In the spring of 2007, the Task Force selected a communications consultant to research the interaction of NHLA and its members. The consultant recommended an evolution of the NHLA brand to better reflect recent changes in the industry and the impact on our members. In November 2007, the NHLA Board of Managers unanimously approved a set of new brand attributes and a new logo. Please see opposite page our new logo, the brand attributes and steps NHLA is taking to meet the new standards.

This brand reflects our new focus.

- We will, as always, be keeper of the rules for our industry. They are the foundation of NHLA. However, NHLA’s communication efforts will go beyond just addressing NHLA services.

- We intend to be deeply involved in the forces shaping the future of the industry: certification, consumer choice, global trade, etc. In order to provide further leadership, NHLA will engage the media in a more proactive role. The NHLA’s education program will also be adding enhanced education courses designed to give members what we and our employees need at all levels of their careers, be it entry level, mid management, or senior executives.

- We will continue our increased involvement with the Hardwood Council, Hardwood Federation and the American Hardwood Export Council. Change is a given Our markets and the industry are now global, and the stakes are too high for us to simply be sitting on the sidelines.

- We not only have to adapt, but reinvent our communication strategy and revitalize our brand. The NHLA has been the premier hardwood association for over 110 years. Such a rich history gives us the foundation to create, captivate and connect.

As we make these changes, we are fully aware that we are continuing the legacy of the visionaries who foresaw the future of our industry. And by being visionaries of the industry today, we are building on their proud legacy.

Jim Howard, President
Atlanta Hardwood Corp.
www.hardwoodweb.com
CHANGING TIMES

During a recent roundtable of hardwood executives in Pittsburgh, the question was asked: “Is this a normal economic business cycle or a reflection of fundamental change?” The unanimous response was fundamental change. The paradigm is shifting. The loss of the furniture industry clearly represents fundamental change for hardwood markets, although I still think the effects of that change were somewhat dampened by an historic upswing in the housing market. The change in timberland ownership (i.e. Timos), globalization and the flood of imports, the green movement and the potential for biomass energy are all fundamental changes in the marketplace.

This issue of Hardwood Matters highlights how fundamental changes and the global economy touch all of us in our businesses. Mike Snow, the Executive Director of AHEC, reports on emerging hardwood markets overseas. Michael Buckley, NHLA’s representative in Singapore, discusses our association activities in Asia.

Another feature story focuses on the high cost of shipping containers. Our company has seen ocean freight container costs to Italy increase from $500 to $1200 this year. As container availability continues to tighten, shipments are delayed as lumber often gets bumped off ships to make room for even higher paying customers.

A reflection of the changing times is NHLA becoming more engaged in the international hardwood community. This year’s NHLA Convention theme is “The Global Gathering of the Hardwood Community.” A recent board strategic decision was to not put our heads in the sand and fret about changing times, but to promote worldwide use of our grading rules and promote North American forest resources and NHLA to lumber traders and customers worldwide. AHEC and NHLA have already invited Asian delegates and European members to attend our San Francisco convention.

This September in Washington, DC, NHLA will host a certification summit to address the global environmental concerns about sustainability and legality of our hardwood resource. And, just this past month in July, Mark Horne chaired the task force on international hardwood grading standards in Kuala Lumpur.

NHLA grading rules are still the “gold standard” in the international markets. The potential undermining of these NHLA rules would make us all less competitive in the long term. The NHLA Board strongly supports teaching our grading rules overseas to protect our brand integrity.

We hope you enjoy this month’s issue of Hardwood Matters. This publication strives to stay current and relevant. Please send us your feedback as we address such important issues as environmental sustainability, globalization, government relations, NHLA grades, hardwood certification and public awareness. NHLA has a rich history and is always evolving. Our new tagline is “Strong Roots, Global Reach.” Let’s all help make it happen.

Jim Howard, President
Atlanta Hardwood Corp.
www.hardwoodweb.com