



N E W S & I N F O R M A T I O N

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Contact: Kevin Hayes, *APA – The Engineered Wood Association*
Email: Kevin.Hayes@apawood.org
Phone: 253-620-7445
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***Sustainable Resource House Links Forest Practices
with Efficient Building Materials***

(TACOMA) Thousands of visitors to our nation’s capital saw first hand the link between our forests, our homes, and green building practices in North America when they toured the Sustainable Resource House, a 1,200-square-foot wood demonstration house on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

“The response to the house has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic,” said Mike Ritter, assistant director, USDA Forest Service, Forest Products Laboratory. “It’s been incredible. People are loving the house because it’s resource efficient, energy efficient and comfortable.”

The house, a joint project of wood products associations and manufacturers and the USDA Forest Service, Forest Products Laboratory, demonstrated the link between sustainable forestry, modern efficient wood products and green building. Displayed from June 23 to July 4 as part of the annual Folklife Festival sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution, the house and other exhibits at the festival commemorated the 100th anniversary of the USDA Forest Service.

Following the festival, the house was dismantled and moved to North Carolina, where it will be reconstructed and donated to Habitat for Humanity.

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The festivities kicked off with an Opening Event attended by more than 100 representatives of the wood products industry, US Department of Agriculture, USDA Forest Service, USDA Forest Products Laboratory, and other government agencies. The family selected by Habitat for Humanity to receive the home also attended, and was escorted by Marnette Colborne, director of the Haywood, North Carolina, Affiliate of Habitat for Humanity. In addition to remarks by Dale Bosworth, chief of the USDA Forest Service, Dave Tenney, USDA deputy undersecretary for forestry, John Murphy, *APA – The Engineered Wood Association* immediate past chairman and Dennis Hardman, APA president, the event included tours of the Sustainable Resource House.

“Our nation is benefiting today from the rise of a new way of thinking about how to build our homes, our offices, our stores, and other structures. The green building movement, by seeking to quantify the environmental merits of construction methods and materials, provides an important new tool for making our society truly sustainable...today for us and tomorrow for our children and grandchildren,” Murphy said in his statement. “Sustainable forestry, modern wood processing, and green building methods are natural partners that together can make—and are making—an enormous contribution to the wise use of resources and to a higher standard of living.”

To demonstrate that wise use of resources, the single-family dwelling was constructed with wood I-joists, tongue-and-groove plywood floor sheathing, structural insulated panels that are manufactured with oriented strand board (OSB), laminated veneer lumber, glulam and engineered wood lap siding. The interior walls were framed with finger-jointed southern pine lumber. The front porch, rear deck, and accessibility ramp were constructed with southern pine treated decking and lumber.

The house was prefabricated and assembled on-site by PanelWrights, LLC, a West Virginia-based structural insulated panel builder. The Haywood affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International is coordinating the construction in North Carolina.

The cooperative industry project was sponsored by APA – The Engineered Wood Association, the USDA Forest Products Laboratory, the Structural Insulated Panel Association, and the Southern Pine Council.

“We wanted to build a house that demonstrates to our nation’s leaders and the public how innovative building products and new construction concepts are enabling us to construct homes that make optimum use of our valuable forest resources and provide comfortable, energy-efficient living spaces,” said Hardman.

A number of factors contribute to the sustainability of the engineered wood products used in the demonstration house. The products are manufactured from timber that comes from managed, renewable forests. The manufacturing process for structural wood products is more energy efficient than the manufacturing process of any other structural building material. Compared to the amount of energy it takes to produce one ton of wood, it takes 5 times more energy for cement, 14 times more for glass, and 24 times more for steel.

Wood also performs well over the life of the building, helping to maximize long-term benefits of a renewable resource. In scientific circles, life cycle assessment (LCA) is emerging as the accepted way to determine the true environmental impact of any product. LCA provides a “cradle to grave” measurement of a product’s environmental impacts from raw material extraction and manufacture through distribution, use, maintenance, and disposal.

LCA studies show that wood is better for the environment than steel or concrete in terms of embodied energy, global warming potential, air emissions, water emissions, and solid waste production.

Murphy noted how the USDA Forest Service and the wood product manufacturing industry have worked together over the years to make better use of the forest resource and develop products that are both sustainable and structurally superior. He said the USDA Forest Products Laboratory has played a key role in research leading to many of the engineered wood products used in the construction of the Sustainable Resource House.

“The Forest Product Laboratory has been involved in development of engineered wood products since it began in Wisconsin in 1910,” said Ritter. “We remain committed to developing sustainable wood products and encouraging research that increases our forests’ health and decreases the chance of a catastrophic forest fire.”

Both the Forest Service and the softwood plywood industry are marking their 100th anniversaries this year. “It was only partly by chance that the Forest Service and plywood industry started at the same time,” Murphy said. “A slow but broad shift in thinking was taking place a century ago. It became increasingly clear that unless the country renewed and managed its forests, and made better use of them through innovative products, we would eventually destroy one of our most precious natural resources. Today, 100 years later, as a result of that shift in thinking, our country remains blessed with bountiful, renewable forest resources.”

The products used in the construction of the Sustainable Resource House were manufactured from fast-growing, underutilized wood species grown in carefully managed forests. Through modern manufacturing technologies, products such as plywood, oriented strand board, I-joists, glued laminated beams and finger-jointed lumber maximize what was once considered less desirable wood fiber to make strong, consistent building materials. More information on the products displayed in the house can be found at www.sustainableresourcehouse.org.

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For more information contact APA at 253-565-6600. Founded in 1933, APA - The Engineered Wood Association (formerly American Plywood Association) is a nonprofit trade association whose domestic and international members produce a variety of engineered wood products. APA's primary functions are quality inspection and testing, applied research and product promotion.