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## Members Speak

A web-based survey of the Center's members was conducted in late April and May using Virginia Tech's [survey.vt.edu](http://survey.vt.edu) website. We appreciate all of the members that participated in the survey which provided valuable feedback. The survey consisted of 10 questions. The question about the issues facing the forest products industry for the next 5 years seemed to be most important to members since it elicited a response from every entry. The results are summarized below by question.

### 1. What do you think is the greatest benefit that you receive from the Center?

The general consensus centered on the availability of students for recruitment, up-to-date research information, and training of current employees through the Center's short courses.

### 2. How has the Center directly helped your organization in the past?

Most responses indicated that the first question had already covered this question. Some responses cited specific research such as CCA lumber recycling and forest certification, while other responses revealed that educating students and training employees was helpful.

### 3. How can the Center help you now or in the future?

A couple of responses stressed the need for recruiting students into the Marketing & Management Option. Other responses suggested that the Center should provide information on issues important to the industry, conduct industry surveys, identify current and future trends in various business segments, and perform targeted research, all of which the Center currently does.

### 4. How can the Center change to better serve your needs?

Most responses were unsure of what changes would better serve their needs. Other responses included ensuring that communication is up-to-date, availing office space for visiting Center members and compiling market pricing. One response thought that the addition of the Sloan Foundation would help the Center.

### 5. If you could change one aspect of the Center, what would it be?

Most responses were uncertain of what they would change. Responses included getting a communications person on a permanent basis, having better access to information on what the Center is doing, and performing more hardwood market research.

### 6. What do you believe are the most important issues facing the Forest Products Industry for the next 5 years?

As indicated, this question was answered by every entrant and due to its importance each response is bulleted below:

- Imported lumber and products, and the worldwide expansion of lumber and lumber product production.
- Lack of access to the product. Lack of top notch individuals who want to work in our industry. Lack of new leaders to take the industry to the next level.
- The promotion of the fact that harvesting a tract of timber is not bad for the environment.
- I think world competition will be our biggest issue as other countries such as Russia develop their resource.

## Members Speak (continued)

- In Virginia I believe land use will be a critical issue. We will have to focus on protecting our forest products production capabilities and we will have to learn how to represent our industry in a light that allows it to be competitive in the global marketplace. SFI issues can be resolved without breaking the bank. We just need to communicate better.
- Global competition for our domestic business. I think we will have to diversify our own product mix beyond what we offer today to stay in business.
- Competition from alternative and imported species. Balancing the supply abundance of oak with the demand trend toward close grain woods.
- Dealing with the Chinese for supply of raw materials as well as with competing with their products coming into our country competing with our own.
- Competing in the world market. Be more cost efficient and define differential benefits for the US Industry.
- Maintaining the industry interest of rising "stars" and assuring them their contributions will make a positive impact in the forest products industry. International partnerships for mutual benefit.
- New chemicals that could impact the SYP business, the composite woods and their success in the industry, import woods, the need for wood in developing regions such as China, continued consolidation of small mills into the larger ones, and will the same consolidation continue to take place at the retail level. After an expected lull in housing starts in 2006, will this pick back up in 2007 as result of immigrants being able to afford housing along with a new group of retirees coming to market, and a continued passing on of wealth from one generation to the next which would require newer or remodeled housing to continue at a greater pace than anticipated.
- Exporting our raw resources, we should be only exporting value added products.
- Loss of manufacturing that has been our traditional markets. Imports that will slow the demand for North American species. Sufficient profitability due to raising labor and uncontrollable operating costs (fuel, health insurance, etc). These operating issues coupled with the intensive capital requirements for inventory and equipment are going to make the future environment in the lumber industry very difficult.

### **7. The undergraduate curriculum was revised. Are there any further changes that should be implemented?**

Responses included eliminating the organic chemistry requirement in the Forest Products Marketing and Management option, adding a requirement for an internship and making no changes.

### **8. What applied research would help your organization?**

Responses encompassed research on domestic and import production, new international markets, underdeveloped markets, market trends on member's customers, treated wood industry, and customer service.

### **9. How can the Center's continuing education classes be improved in terms of course offerings and content?**

Responses suggested a series of courses on management of wood products manufacturing, an international trade mission, more in-depth curriculum in the advanced selling course, a lumber grading short course and a lumber drying short course.

### **10. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?**

Responses suggested taking advantage of federal dollars, not letting Joanne retire, and research into starting salaries for college graduates and interns.

## Center Focus



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## Website Redesign

The Center's website has been redesigned to make it easier to navigate and give it a more modern layout. The web pages are larger than the previous pages and will therefore take longer to load on your computer. The new web pages average about 90KB in size. If the web pages seem to take a long time to upload, then click the refresh button in your internet browser. Once they are loaded onto your computer though the pages should display quickly because your computer looks for a more recent version and does not have to download the entire page.

The website (main page shown below) has a navigation bar on the left and at the top. These navigation bars are displayed on every page which should make browsing the website much easier. The members' only section still requires a user name and password and has different navigation bars. The web pages for the curriculum, job opportunities, and scholarships have been moved to the education page. The web page for personnel contact information has been moved to the about us page. A comments page has been added to enable feedback from visitors. Please consider visiting the website and making suggestions on how it could be further improved. All comments are sent to Brian Perkins who manages the website.

### New Center Contact

Brian Perkins is a graduate research assistant who has been working part time for the Center since February. He has been working with Dr. Smith on small diameter timber utilization. Brian is responsible for the newsletter, the website and communications with Center members. Brian started graduate school at Virginia Tech in the fall of 2004. Before coming back to school, Brian worked as a manager for a custom cabinetry firm and as a salesperson for an architectural millwork firm, both in Winchester, VA. He received a Bachelors degree in Wood Science from West Virginia University and an Associate degree in Forest Technology from Glenville State College. If you have any questions regarding the Center, please contact Brian at 540-231-4406 or [perkinsb@vt.edu](mailto:perkinsb@vt.edu).



**Center for Forest Products Marketing & Management**  
"To assist firms in the forest products industry to improve the management of their operations and the marketing of their products."

Research | Outreach | Education | Short Courses

Firms in the forest products industry are faced every day with new challenges and new opportunities as the industry continues to undergo consolidation as well as new and growing global competition. The Center for Forest Products Marketing and Management is a cooperative between the [Department of Wood Science and Forest Products at Virginia Tech](#) and its industry partners that seeks to help companies remain competitive through its marketing of products as well as its management of people and production.

**Announcements**

- [Lean Manufacturing Short Course](#)
- [Career Opening with Timber Truss](#)
- [Take our Member Survey!](#)

**To contact us:**

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## Become a Member

The Center offers a great value and many benefits to its members including student placement, discounts on continuing education courses, research projects, research updates and market intelligence studies. Membership forms are available on our website. Please renew your membership and encourage others to join the Center at one of the following levels:

**Active** is the basic level of involvement with the Center. Donations of \$500 cover the basics of providing your company with Center benefits. Active contributors support market updates, as well as recruiting and training students for employment in industry. Active contributors receive the Center Focus and the Research Update. Active contributors also receive access to student resumes on the Center website. Active contributors also receive a discount to attend continuing education courses sponsored by the faculty of the Center conducted on the Virginia Tech campus.

**Supporting** contributors donate between \$500 and \$1500 dollars. Any amount over the basic \$500 dollar level can be allocated as the donor desires (i.e., scholarship, operating expense, or a special project). Supporting contributors receive the Center Focus, the Research Update, and market tracking studies. Supporting contributors also receive access to the Center's placement programs for graduating students and interns, as well as our job alumni network. Supporting contributors also receive a discount to attend continuing education courses sponsored by the faculty of the Center conducted on the Virginia Tech campus.

**Sustaining** contributors donate \$1500 dollars or more. Many sustaining contributors choose to allocate a portion of their donation for a student scholarship with a name of their choosing. Many companies at this level also offer a summer internship position to students in our program. Sustaining contributors have access to all of the Center's research, recruiting tools, as well as professional services.

## Calendar of Events

### Center for Forest Products Marketing & Management

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*August 8-10th*

*Lean Manufacturing Short Course*

The workshop will be held at the Wood Education & Resource Center in Princeton, WV. For more information visit the Center's website.

*October 2005*

*Forest Products Marketing Short Course*

The course will introduce forest products, marketing basics, marketing strategy and research to new marketing and sales personnel.

*December 2005*

*Selling Forest Products Short Course*

The basics of personal selling will be taught so that current or new sales personnel can improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

*September 28th*

*Center Annual Meeting & Banquet*

The 14th Annual meeting and awards banquet will be held in conjunction with college and department level meetings. Mark your calendars for this important event.