Westside Pallet's Congressional Plant Tour

Importance of Congressional Visits

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North American Softwood Prices

Weekly softwood lumber prices to July 21, 2015 are shown below, sourced at http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests/industry/13309.

Upcoming Events

9/28/2015 - 9/30/2015
PACK EXPO Las Vegas
Las Vegas, Nevada
www.packexpolasvegas.com

10/20/2015-10/22/2015
Lumber, Pallets & Recycling: NWPCA/AHMI Fall Plant Tours
Charlotte, North Carolina
www.palletcentral.com

10/28/2015-10/30/2015
FEFPEB 66th Congress
Cork, Ireland
www.fefpebcongress.com

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Members in the News

Westside Pallet Holds Successful Congressional Visit

Westside Pallet recently held a successful congressional visit, a story picked up by the Modesto Bee (click here to see that report).

"We invited Congressman Jeff Denham to visit our plant in support of the NWPCA's (National Wooden Pallet & Container Association) efforts to encourage all of us members to invite our congressman to visit pallet manufacturing plants throughout the nation," explains Carolyn Beach-Skinner, vice president of operations for Westside Pallets. "As president of the WPA this year, I wanted to do my part to support their efforts. This is a way to bridge the gap between policy makers and pallet manufacturers."

Carolyn explains that such visits help lawmakers see how their decisions may affect everyday pallet industry operations. In addition, she believed the visit was a good way to show Congressman Denham that his efforts in supporting water rights and water storage in the Central Valley not only will help the farmers and ag businesses, but also suppliers to the ag industry such as pallet providers. "Our business directly correlates to the ag industry," she says. "Our drought is a great concern in our area and Denham is an advocate for this issue."

"Congressman Denham's office was quick to respond to our invite and it was a pleasure to show him our facility and what we do," Carolyn elaborates. "We appreciate his visit. Our industry also wants to promote our wood pallets as an economical and sustainable product that is recycled over and over and then ground into mulch at the end of its life. Pallets are not something most people think about and it is great to expose our industry to those that are not in it.

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Carolyn was extremely appreciative of Patrick Atagi of NWPCA who also initiated the conversation with Denham's office in inviting him to tour and setting the date. "Patrick also flew out here to our facility in California and spoke to Denham and all our guests about the political issues that our industry faces," she adds. (Continued on Page 10)
WPA Membership
Time to Renew!

Just a friendly reminder that WPA membership renewal dues for the coming year are due on July 1st.

Invoices were mailed out June 1st. Thank you to everyone who has paid early. Members can quickly renew their membership online, at link: http://www.westernpallet.org/join_us.htm#Renewal. to request another invoice, email the WPA office.

Virginia Tech Short Courses Offered
This Summer

The Center for Packaging and Unit Load Design is offering the following two short courses. For additional details, follow the links.

Pallet Design and Performance - August 4-6, 2015 Click here.

Unit Load Design - September 15-17, 2015 Click here.

For more information, please visit: http://unitload.vt.edu/education/continuing-education/
Members in the News

Carolyn reports the visit wasn't as much work as she originally anticipated. "Patrick made the initial contact," she explains. "Once the tour date was set, I invited our local media as well as some local customers. I also, invited Annie Montey and Mark Berger of American Pallet in Oakdale and was happy that they came as well. We put together some hors d'oeuvres, pastries, coffee and juices and enjoyed those while I spoke of the history of how Westside Pallet started and Patrick talked about the polical issues. " The presentation, about 20 minutes in length, was followed by a tour of the facility and production line. We spoke to the group for about 15-20 minutes. Then we took the tour of our facility and production line. The entire visit lasted a little over an hour.

The Westside Pallet tour included a video report from the Modesto Bee. Click here to view.
Members in the News

Patrick Atagi on the Importance of Congressional Pallet Plant Tours

PW: What is the goal of events such as the recent Westside Pallet tour, and how do you determine if this one was successful?

Conducting wooden pallet and container plant visits for Members of Congress is a great way to build relationships between industry and legislators who make laws that affect our industry. Congressional members benefit by having an excellent opportunity to interact with small business owners, but also the employees – their constituents – and learn how their policies work in real life. They also see first-hand small business success stories and the challenges that wooden pallet manufacturers face. The tours further benefit local businesses like Westside Pallet Inc., by creating press opportunities and recognition within their communities of the positive work they do by creating jobs and contributing to the local community.

Thorough planning and preparation go into a successful plant tour, which means starting with the invitation and coordinating with the Member of Congress’ staff in Washington, DC to his field staff in the home district. Onsite preparation is also key to a successful event. This means staff and employees are notified that there will be a special guest, and to let them know this is their U.S. Representative that works for them and is there to hear their concerns. The opportunity to interact with their Member of Congress is an honor, and staff naturally shines through when they talk about what they do. Westside Pallet was well prepared with talking points, issue briefs and other relevant informational material. As a result, the Congressman strongly engaged with Carolyn Beach-Skinner and her staff, and came away with a better understanding of the pallet industry.

This was a phenomenal success for Westside Pallets, and also for the Western Pallet Association (WPA), the National Wooden Pallet and Container Association (NWPCA), and the wooden pallet industry as a whole. A goal of the NWPCA long term strategic plan is to raise awareness about the pallet industry amongst key strategic entities and we did just that with Carolyn’s help. A specific result is the NWPCA Facebook page “likes” increased 7.2% and “new” likes were up 181.8%! We now have another Member of Congress who has a better understanding of our industry, so indeed a resounding success.
PW: How were Westside and Carolyn to work with?

Westside Pallets is a successful and well-run business for a reason: Carolyn Beach-Skinner and her team. Carolyn is amazing at juggling multiple projects simultaneously, and her attention to detail is impeccable. This was one of the easier visits I’ve done because Carolyn had taken care of the details from prepping her staff, the logistics of opening and giving a tour of her facility, down to managing the logistics of showing the Congressman what actually happens at a pallet manufacturing facility, and making a presentation on the industry and its concerns. Immediately following the tour, she was right back to work going over customer orders and plant needs with her staff without skipping a beat. I thank Carolyn for being a leader in the industry and ensuring its success. Also, thanks to all the staff at Westside Pallets for hosting this Congressional Mill Tour. They did their due diligence and it showed with a smooth, well run, and educational visit for the Congressman.

PW: Any surprises?

I think that’s the definition of a successful and a well-run tour, no surprises!

PW: Anything upcoming, or how should interested companies begin such a process?

We actually just finished another Congressional tour in Mobile, Alabama with Congressman Bradley Byrnes (AL-1st) which was also very successful. If other wooden pallet companies are interested, I would direct them to our website www.palletcentral.com where they will find under the “Advocacy” tab an online Congressional Mill Tour Guide Book or “How-to” guide. For NWPCA members, I’m available to help with a simple invitation to a Member of Congress to get the process started or assistance to get as close as possible to a “turn-key” Congressional tour.
Termination of ISPM-15 Exemption for U.S. – Canada Trade Indications

Hurry up and wait has been the state of affairs for years, but now it seems as if the termination of the ISPM 15 exemption between Canada and the U.S. will occur within 2 to 3 years, according to Brad Gething, Technical Manager for the National Wooden Pallet and Container Association, who reported on the situation at Pallet Central (click here to follow). As a consequence of such a step, solid wood packaging such as pallets, would be required to be ISPM 15 compliant.

At a U.S. – Canada Regulatory Cooperation Council (RCC) stakeholder briefing which took place at the end of June, a timeline was proposed for the removal of the exemption. One official, Osama El-Lissy, Deputy Administrator, Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) suggested that a Federal Register notice could be published prior to the end of the year, then commencing a sequence of phased-in implementation steps, combined with education and outreach efforts. Full enforcement could require up to two additional years.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) recently posted the proposed steps that would take place following publication of the U.S. regulation for solid wood packaging.
The CWPCA will hold its annual western meeting September 13th and 14th in Vancouver. The event begins with a social event with colleagues, a sunset dinner cruise taking place on September 13.

This will be followed by a meeting you won’t want to miss on Monday at the River Rock Casino Resort! Speakers will include representatives from CFIA, US Customs and Border Patrol, and the BC Fire Marshall’s office.

You will start your morning networking over breakfast, followed by a full morning of informational speakers. After lunch, participants will head off on a short drive to tour the Teal Jones facility, which will complete the day.

For registration information, please visit this link.
Optimizing Oregon's Urban Forests

Talking to urban forest advocate David Barmon, there is a significant opportunity right in our own backyard. That opportunity is in the harvesting of urban forests. According to the U.S. Forest Service, approximately 3.8 billion board feet per year are felled in urban settings. Sadly, most of this timber ends up as firewood. Increasingly, however, Barmon and others are beginning to look at urban timber as an untapped resource, that with proper management, could generate marketable timber in the future.

Barmon encouraged State Rep. Julie Parrish, R-West Linn, to develop a more integrated approach. As a result, Parrish has put together a bill that would provide $400,000 for a pilot project in Clackamas County. The idea is to grow trees for lumber in unutilized urban spaces - both public and private.

Right now, Barmon observes, urban harvesting is extremely inefficient, as they are harvested on a one-off basis here and there. To make matters worse, trees may be in any condition, often riddled with knots and steel. Through geocoding trees and proper management, harvesting could become much more cost-effective.

Read a recent report on the initiative here.

Watch Barmon's TedTalk.
Click image or this link.
In Next Month's Issue

* Nature's Packaging Initiative
A teenage worker's life was altered forever when his employer allowed him to operate machinery illegally and the 14-year-old lost his hand in the process.

Shady Knob Pallet Co. of Middlefield received citations from the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration on July 7, following an inspection that found the young man suffered the injury when he touched the operating parts of a wood planer while manufacturing pallets on March 31. Shady Knob violated the law by allowing an employee under 18 to work on the machine. Inspectors found the wood planer was one of several machines that lacked required safety guards to protect workers.

"Workers under age 18 are prohibited from operating power-driven woodworking machinery, such as the wood planer used here," said Howard Eberts, OSHA's area director in Cleveland. "Without safety mechanisms, personal protective equipment and proper training, employees are at risk. Shady Knob Pallet Co. must know the laws and protect the safety and well-being of its workers."

OSHA issued 17 serious safety violations to the company. Proposed fines total $43,200. In addition to missing safety mechanisms, inspectors found Shady Knob failed to:

- Train worksite staff to provide first aid.
- Establish an exposure control plan for employees exposed to blood during first aid.
- Teach employees about workplace chemical hazards.
- Provide, and train workers on, the use of personal protective equipment.
- Store flammable liquids correctly.
- Use self-closing valves on gasoline drums used to power equipment.
- Install electrical equipment properly.

The Wage and Hour Division is also investigating the company for probable violations of child labor laws.
News Roundup

EPAL Curbs Counterfeits in Czech Republic

After extension of trademark legislation in the Czech republic, counterfeit EPAL pallets were being identified. The customs authorities have already been able to deliver some initial results in just two weeks after the first training course given by the EPAL Academy in the Czech Republic, having identified almost 1,300 counterfeit EPAL Euro pallets. Read more.

PGS Boosts Capacity in Spain by 1 Million Pallets Per Year

Leading French-Belgian wooden pallet company PGS Group (Pallet Management Services) has continued its expansion into Spain, with the opening of PGBS Mediterraneo, a new pallet production unit based in Vila Real, near Valencia.

The company has installed “Corali” line manufacturing in its covered warehouse of 6,000 m² at Vila Real, giving a starting production capacity of one million new pallets a year. This adds to the two million pallet capacity at Maderas Jose Saiz, located near Santander in San Vicente de Toranzo, the result of a newly installed second “Cape” production line. It gives PGS a total Spanish capacity of three million pallets a year. To read more, follow this link.
Axios Mobile Becomes Exclusive Pallet Supplier to Two Major Egg Suppliers

Axios Mobile Assets Corporation, based in Vaughan, Ontario, has announced the expansion of its pooled composite pallet program with Trillium and Centrum Valley Farms, located in Ohio and Iowa, respectively. With this expansion, the two egg producers will completely convert to the Company’s pooled lightweight pallet solution, increasing Axios-serviced distribution centers from two to thirteen. The additional DCs will provide Axios with growth opportunities by increasing the size of the company’s pool and number of issuances, establishing new lanes and driving additional revenue.

“This expansion resonates with our growth plan,” said Axios President and CEO, Richard MacDonald. “Our current growth strategy focuses on the egg market, cold storage and the perishable goods vertical. This network roll-out provides us with more connectivity and the ability to expand the network into new sales opportunities and retailers.”

The Coaching Conversation

Are you having challenges managing a multi-generational workforce? According to Aubrey Daniels, individuals wish to be evaluated on their specific contributions, and not on the basis of assumptions about their particular generation - hence the importance of individual performance. The key to managing effectively across generations is to provide the universal framework and personal focus that encourages positive behavior at the individual level, including:
- Precise pinpoints of behaviors that are valuable to the organization
- Frequent feedback on the progress or lack thereof on those behaviors
- Reinforcement for engaging in those behaviors and when accomplishments are met.

To read more, click here.
Polymer Logistics Announces CleanPal Program: Pooling of Non-Rackable Pallets with Rack Support Incentive

Polymer Logistics is now announcing the introduction of its “CleanPal” nestable plastic pallet to the US market. The company reports having pilot programs with two customers, and involving four categories of perishable products, namely produce, bakery, dairy and meat. The pallet is light, and nests for efficient relocation of empties.

In an interesting approach, Polymer Logistics offers an incentive for companies to install racking supports, either on a rebate on a per-trip basis, or financing arrangements for the installation of the racking supports.

Read more about the CleanPal.

Polymer Logistics is offering a pooling approach based on the durability, sanitation and nestability features of a plastic pallet. It is offering incentives for pallet users to reinforce their racking systems.
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