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<th>Order Total</th>
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USDA Confers BioPreferred Status to PDS-Built Pallets
New acknowledgement from USDA reinforces wood pallets.

Pallet Yard Arson
Pallet companies in California are taking steps to protect their operations from arson.

Softwood Lumber Prices
Our monthly softwood price graph, courtesy of NRCAN.

Weird Wood for Competitive Advantage
BPWood matches unique material availability with industrial wood users to offer innovative solutions.
Membership Drive

This year’s membership drive is already in motion.

“Our 3 Optimax Saws are real workhorses. We run 12,000 plus recycled deckboards a day on two of them and our third saw runs recycled stringers all day long. We could not be happier with their performance and endurance”.

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Other Features

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23 CHEP Awarded Gold as One of the Safest Employers in Canada

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2016 Membership Now Due

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Waste reduction has strong economic and environmental benefits. Many communities can expect zero waste when they shift from a “take, make and throw away” model to a circular economy where end of life materials are used to create new products.

The North American wood packaging industry has one of the highest rates of recycling and exceeds other forms of industrial and consumer packaging such as aluminum, paper and plastic.

**WOOD WASTE AS A RESOURCE**

The wood packaging industry in North America has one of the highest rates of recycling exceeding other forms of industrial and consumer packaging such as aluminum, paper and plastic. Wood packaging and pallets at the end of life are re-processed and the resulting wood fiber is re-used in such products as landscape mulch, animal bedding, soil enhancements, wood particle board, or used in bioenergy.

**UNITED STATES**

Wooden pallets are a success story in solid wood recycling in the United States. In 2011, the most recent year for which detailed data are available, an estimated 474 million pallets were recovered for recycling. That translates into an annual reduction of 13,328,800 metric tons of carbon emissions, or 45,480,300 cars taken off the road. These recovered pallets were repurposed into recycled pallets or were processed into new wood fiber products with very low levels of wood waste ending up in land fill.

**CANADA**

Industrial and consumer packaging handled by municipalities include such materials as plastics, steel and aluminum cans, glass containers and cardboard containers. Wood pallets and packaging are extensively reused many times over and recycled at end of life. Wood packaging is regarded as an insignificant waste issue due to the success of the reuse and recycling programs in place.

---

1, 2 Trends in the Use of Wood Products for Distribution Packaging Cooperative Agreement No. 11-CA1130142-13 Robert J. Bush Department of Sustainable Biomaterials Virginia Tech Blacksburg, Virginia and Philip A. Araman Research Team Leader USDA – Forest Service Southern Research Station Blacksburg, Virginia April 2014 (Revised May 2015)
USDA Confers 100% BioBased Status on PDS-Made Wooden Pallets

Wood Pallets Manufactured Using PDS are ‘USDA Certified Biobased Products’

The US Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) BioPreferred® Program and the National Wooden Pallet & Container Association (NWPCA) have announced that all coated and uncoated wood pallets manufactured with NWPCA’s Pallet Design System™ (PDS) are now recognized by USDA’s BioPreferred® Program. Wood pallet manufacturers that use PDS may now affix a USDA Certified Biobased Product label to their PDS-made pallets showing they are 100% biobased products.

“Achieving certification for our PDS users confirms the strong environmental attributes of wood pallets and presents tremendous opportunities for our members,” said Brent McClendon, President and CEO of NWPCA.

All Federal agencies and their contractors have a sustainable product acquisition mandate to purchase biobased products identified by USDA’s BioPreferred® program.

“Biobased certification for NWPCA members’ pallets is an important accomplishment in demonstrating the sustainability of wood (Cont’d on Page 10)
PDS-Built Pallets Now Enjoy BioPreferred Status

(Cont'd from Page 9) products,” said Kate Lewis of USDA’s BioPreferred® Program.

“To receive product certification from USDA, pallets manufactured using PDS underwent third-party testing of multiple products," Lewis explained.

“We’ve been able to verify the Pallet Design System™ meets the strict requirements of the BioPreferred® Program and allows all of NWPCA’s PDS-using membership into the program. Hundreds of companies are now partners in the Program and may begin labelling their pallets."

McClendon added, “It is a tremendous honor for us that USDA has recognized the innovative aspects of our Pallet Design System™ and how incorporating durability into wood pallet design reduces our nation’s reliance on petroleum."

- Brent McClendon

- a voluntary product certification and labeling initiative.
A product’s biobased content is the portion of a product that comes from a renewable carbon source, such as plant, animal, marine, or forestry feedstocks. Utilizing biobased materials displaces the need for non-renewable petroleum-based materials and plays an increasingly important role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions that exacerbate global climate change.

(Cont'd on Page 14)
California Pallet Companies Take Steps to Confront the Risk of Arson

Overnight and weekend pallet yard fires continue to occur with disturbing frequency in Southern California. Pallet operators are increasingly coming to the conclusion that arson is involved, and are urging industry members to take steps to safeguard their properties.

On November 4, yet another suspicious fire broke out in San Bernardino (click on video immediately below), with other suspicious fires taking place November 13 in the City of Industry and on November 18, in Perris.
The GPC Pallets fire in Perris was reported at 2:49 am on November 18 and by 6 am had spread across two acres of the property. It was a three-alarm fire, involving 58 firefighters. According to a Riverside County Fire Department fact sheet, losses were estimated at $300,000 with $1.5 million in losses prevented by emergency response. The West Ramona freeway was closed for several hours.

The November 4 fire in San Bernardino started before 4 am and pulled in 70 firefighters and 19 engines to confront the flames. By 7 am the fire had been contained.

According to the report in the San Bernardino Sun, closed circuit television footage showed a flash in the lower corner of the screen, in an area where there was no electrical service, leading one observer to question if someone had thrown a Molotov cocktail.

On October 30, Meza Pallets in Fontana experienced a fire which was quickly contained. It was reported at 4:20 am, with damage to pallets and one forklift reported. Firefighters were able to quickly contain it because there was no wind.

Local pallet companies in the Fontana area have raised about $33,000 in reward money towards catching the arsonist, Lina Montes of G.O. Pallets explained to Western Pallet, in response to growing concern about the rash of pallet yard fires.

Montes said that before the recent footage that showed evidence of arson, pallet operators had suspected foul play because the fires had been taking place at night or on the weekends. "We don't work on the weekends or at night," Montes said. At first the fire department attributed the fires to possible electrical problems. G.O. Pallets surveillance footage from its January fire showed a car pulling up in front of their property, lighting something and then throwing it on top of the pallets, and got back in his car and leaving, Montes said.

### Security Measures Taken

Montes advises pallet operations to "Just be safe." A request for FBI involvement has been considered. Security measures such as installing or upgrading lighting and CC camera systems as well as implementing security guards have been undertaken by several local companies.

"Until the arsonist is caught, we don't know who is next," Montes cautioned.
North American Softwood Prices

Weekly softwood lumber prices to November 15, 2016 are shown below, sourced at http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests/industry/13309.

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Federal law, the Federal Acquisition Regulation, and Presidential Executive Orders direct that all federal agencies purchase biobased products in categories identified by the Department of Agriculture (USDA). To date, USDA has identified 97 categories (e.g. cleaners, carpet, lubricants, paints) of biobased products for which agencies and their contractors have purchasing requirements. Each mandatory purchasing category specifies the minimum biobased content for products within the category.

At the consumer level, USDA wants to make it easy for consumers to identify biobased products. The USDA Certified Biobased Product label, displayed on a product certified by USDA, is designed to provide useful information to consumers about the biobased nature of the product.

"We’re proud to have USDA recognize PDS and the role it plays in wood pallet design and durability," NWPCA writes at its website. "If you are a licensee of PDS, then you participate in the USDA BioPreferred® program and your shipping pallets are USDA Certified Biobased products."
Click here to request a download of the USDA Certified Biobased Product label.

NWPCA members with questions about the program or details about how to use the USDA BioPreferred® label should contact Patrick Atagi, VP of Advocacy & External Affairs, NWPCA, at 703-519-6104.

Overturned Forklift Results in Fatality

A San Francisco lumber yard experienced a fatality on November 20. A 58 year old operator died after being pinned under an overturned forklift at the bottom of a ramp.

According to a news report, a pallet containing bags of material was still on the forks.

While details were not provided in this particular report, it underscores the importance of counterbalance lift truck operators wearing their seatbelt, as well as the hazards associated with industrial truck operation on ramps.

Visit this OSHA webpage to review safe operating requirements on slopes, including ramps.
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BPWood Brings Unique Solutions to the Pallet and Industrial Wood Market

This month, we focus on BPWood, which joined WPA earlier in 2016. Western Pallet Magazine caught up with Dan and Paul Bouchard of BPWood recently at a wood products meeting in the Vancouver, BC area. (Watch for their table at the upcoming 2017 WPA Annual Meeting.)

While BPWood has been marketing wood products since 2000, it only began to focus on the pallet and industrial wood market in recent years. “Five years ago, you wouldn’t have heard about us,” explained Paul Bouchard, Chairman & CEO of BP Wood. Paul initially grew the business himself before adding his first trader during 2005-2006. “Now we have 10 traders in the company and adding more as we find the right talent,” he explained, “and our bread and butter is what we like to call Weird Wood. The weirder the better.”

Excuse me?

“We chase business that is not your everyday sizes, Paul continued. “Not a lot of people will put in the effort and the energy to understand the whole spectrum of odd wood sizes. It becomes a world unto itself and we consider ourselves to be pretty good at that. And then we reach out to find industries to apply it to, and the pallet and industrial wood turned out to be a natural fit.”

A veteran of over three decades in the industry, Paul has specialized in unique products for much of that time. For many years he provided marketing services to a single species Alberta mill that produced 17 different cross sections, each sorted rough into four grades after the kilns and before planing. “You look at the (Cont’d on Page 18)
scale of the possibilities in that product potential grid and that was my major playground for 15 years,” he said.

Paul stated that the odd size market for lumber emerged in the 1970s when the major mills began pumping out more and more material in fewer and fewer sizes. For the industries that did need specific sizes that had been coming out of small mills, their challenge became harder as the product mix became homogenized. “But the demands didn’t necessarily change all that much. So it really opened up an opportunity for people to understand that.”

With that ongoing industry shift as his base, Paul started taking his sensibility about unique niche products and markets to independant, family owned mills that were getting squeezed out by the big operations. “They weren’t going to be able to compete on scale or throughput or money,” Paul said. “They had to compete on something else. Guys like me started developing a business around bringing those small mills opportunities that could leverage their skill set and uniqueness to find consumption for what they could make.”

An example of a BPWood relationship is one with a small producer that processes treetops. These treetops were previously left in the bush. They were too small to recover by large mills into grade 2x4. The mill, which is First Nations owned and which has 65% women and First Nations employees, runs this previously unwanted material into sizes such as 80x80 mm, or 3 ⅛ “ square.

“What do you do with a 3 ⅛” square in the pallet world? Most guys would say ‘I don’t know,’” Dan quipped. “It is something you could use for stringer if you need a little more strength than a 2x4” and don’t want to pay for an extra 2x4“ or gang into unique thickness deckboards. It is classic example of trying to do something new and weird with a great story behind it, great logic, and competitive value.”

Dan stated the obvious in saying that the world is getting harder for brokers unless they can offer some sort of unique value. He noted that information is available everywhere. “Lists get put online for anyone in the world who has a web browser to see and buy.

“The traditional lumber broker knew a guy who knew a guy,” Dan said. “That world is gone. You need to be transparent. A lot of guys are getting Darwined out of the business.”

BPWood relishes applying their
knowledge to extremely complex pallet and industrial wood problems. “As more plants add pallet design software, BPWood can bring cross sections to them that they have never heard of, and be innovative about working with them to find applications,” Paul said. “They can make more money or gain new business. And if they can make a pallet that is lighter or stronger or lower cost, they’ve got an edge over their competitors, so they become pretty loyal to us.”

Would you like to have your WPA-member company featured in Western Pallet Magazine? To find out more, contact newsdesk@westernpallet.org.
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➔ Our monthly newsletter, Western Pallet Magazine, helps keep members informed of current events and trends and offers affordable advertising to its members.

➔ WPA’s website, www.westernpallet.org, provides fast access to our membership directory and other important Association information.
Independent Block Pallet Study Identifies Cost Savings Opportunities

According to an independent study conducted by The Poirier Group (TPG) in Canada, a single distribution center can save an estimated half million dollars every year simply by using block pallets instead of traditional Canadian pooled stringer pallets. The five-week study estimated total annual savings for a Sobeys warehouse location at $497,500, which included $441,100 in transportation savings and $56,400 savings in operational efficiency.

Lisa Vegso, PECO Pallet General Manager, Canada, said: “We are very pleased to have clear proof of what we knew already: using block pallets can lead to improved efficiencies and substantial cost savings throughout the supply chain. We hope this study helps more distributors throughout Canada and the U.S. to understand the significant benefits of using four-way block pallets like PECO.”

In April and May 2016, PECO Pallet hired The Poirier Group (TPG), a business consulting firm, to conduct a five-week independent study on block pallet utilization in a selected Sobeys distribution center. TPG conducted exploratory and fact-finding interviews at the Sobeys warehouse, collected data, and recorded their observations. TPG then analyzed the data and modeled potential annualized benefits in both time and cost savings. PECO Pallet funded the study and collaborated on the overall approach and timeline, but otherwise had no involvement during the evaluation process.

The most dramatic cost savings were related to transportation efficiency. The average weight of a typical Canadian pooled stringer pallet is 90 pounds, versus 65 pounds for a PECO or similar block pallet. TPG calculated the additional fuel costs that are incurred for
transporting the additional weight of stringer pallets. Even more significant savings were identified due to the increased cube utilization possible with four-way block pallets. With stringer pallets, the average number of pallets per load is between 24 and 28. Block pallets allow for up to 30 pallets to be loaded on the floor of the trailer. The combined transportation savings from increasing the cube and reducing pallet weight was estimated at $441,100 per year.

Additional cost savings were identified in operational efficiency. At the Sobeys warehouse, researchers observed that stringer pallets cause issues and delays during loading. While the true four-way entry of a block pallet enables easy access and the ability to pinwheel with a standard pallet jack, stringer pallets require the use of dock stockers, which leads to additional capital and equipment maintenance costs. The total estimated savings in operational efficiency from using block pallets instead of stringer pallets was estimated at $56,400.

To read an overview of the TPG Block Pallet Utilization study, go to www.pecopallet.com.

CHEP Awarded Gold as One of the Safest Employers in Canada

Congratulations to WPA-member CHEP, which has been named by Canadian Occupational Safety Magazine (COSM) as one of Canada’s safest employers. CHEP received the Gold Award in the retail and service sector at a gala event in Toronto on October 24, 2016. In 2015, CHEP received a Silver Award from the publication.

The COSM awards recognize companies from across Canada that promote the health and safety of their workers. This award is given in ten industry sector categories, ranging from hospitality to mining and natural resources. Companies are judged on several key performance indicators, including training, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) management systems, incident investigation, emergency preparedness and innovation. Read more.
LPR Automates Its Marseilles Service Center and Looks to Boost Its European Network

European pallet rental provider LPR-La Palette Rouge recently held a ceremony to inaugurate its new automated sorting and renovation line in France. The installation at its Service Centre located at its location near Marseilles has been operating for six months.

The company states that this move confirms its determination to meet the requirements of its sophisticated customer base.

“In this way LPR is joining its customers in a general movement toward growing mechanization, requiring the use of pallets of constantly higher quality. Automating our production line will also improve the working conditions of our operators while increasing the productivity of the sorting and renovation activities,” explains Yves Degouve, LPR’s Regional Manager for Western Europe.

The introduction of this new line fits more generally in La Palette Rouge’s plan to modernize its service centers across Europe. “We need to be able to process the pallets in their entirety with precise specifications, and we must provide the necessary tools for this,” adds Degouve. Its service center upgrade project, dubbed “Strong 2016”, represents an investment of several million euros. La Palette Rouge has already equipped several of its sites, in particular in Belgium and Spain.

LPR is determined to meet the needs of its sophisticated customer base.

The Saint-Martin-de-Crau Service Center, which is the third largest LPR site in France covers 100,000 square feet and has a permanent workforce of 40. It is managed by TSP (Toulouse Services Palettes). LPR deals with three million pallets a year at this location, and the new automated line will allow an increase of 20 to 25% in the volumes processed.

In 2017, LPR intends to modernize one depot in northern France as well as to build a new service center in Poitiers, located in the west of the country.
RM2 Announces Upgraded Pallets, Tracking Technology and Tracking Pilot With AT&T

High tech composite pallet supplier RM2 International recently announced the launch of a proprietary solution to monitor pallets as they move through the supply chain. ELIoT (Electronic Link to the Internet of Things) is a track & trace monitoring device that enhances both pallet and supply chain security and provides actionable information.

“What separates ELIoT from other track & trace technologies is that it’s knitted into the fabric of the BLOCKPal™ and it’s completely maintenance free,” said David Simmons, Chief Technology Officer of RM2. “ELIoT can provide a standalone service or be seamlessly integrated into a customer’s operational IT systems.” Also of note, the cellular technology will not require readers in the supply chain, as is the case with RFID applications.

RM2 also announced that it is participating in a tracking pilot with AT&T, which is working with a variety of technology leaders to showcase the new LTE-M technology that will bring the IoT to a new generation of devices and markets. AT&T has launched North America’s first LTE-M enabled commercial site in the San Francisco market to support the pilot of AT&T’s LTE-M Low-Power Wide-Area network beginning in late November. AT&T plans to make the technology available across its commercial network throughout 2017.

“Our work with RM2 during our LTE-M pilot will show how this new technology can help the packaging and supply chain industries increase their efficiency and sustain the integrity of their products,” said Chris Penrose, President, Internet of Things Solutions, AT&T. “This a prime example of how innovations like LTE-M will help bring the IoT to more endpoints than ever before.”

RM2 also indicated that it will begin pallet production in Q1 2017 at their new joint ventures in China and Mexico, after repositioning capacity from its plant in Canada earlier this year.
CHEP’s Packaging Performance Solutions Deliver $1 Million in Savings

During a presentation at PACK EXPO, CHEP’s Ben Eugrin, Director of Supply Chain Solutions, and Mohammad Ansari, Senior Manager of Product Development, outlined innovative Packaging Performance Solutions that resulted in more than $1 million in savings and significant return on investment for CHEP customers. The solutions were developed as the result of extensive packaging analysis, simulated supply chain modeling and verification testing conducted at the CHEP Innovation Center in Orlando, Florida.

“The details are incredibly important when it comes to supply chain management, and no one is better at the details than CHEP,” said Mr. Eugrin. “Drawing on our experience, knowledge and analytical capabilities, we are able to help customers develop innovative solutions that drive efficiency, cost savings and environmental benefits.”

The customer savings outlined at PACK EXPO were generated from unit load optimization, packaging performance improvements and product damage reduction. Customer cost savings outlined by CHEP showed:
- A beverage manufacturer saved $500,000 with new bottles, optimized corrugate weight and adjusted stretch wrap thickness – a return on the company’s investment of 400%.
- A tissue manufacturer saved $320,000 by switching to recycled corrugate for its secondary packaging.
- A private label manufacturer saved $200,000 by eliminating slip sheets when transporting its pre-moistened wipes.

The CHEP Innovation Center in Orlando, Florida, is an ISTA-certified, state-of-the-art test facility that simulates real-world conditions that help CHEP and its customers evaluate their supply chains and develop innovative solutions that increase efficiency, reduce costs and increase sustainability. Led by ISTA-certified experts and engineers, the Innovation Center has conducted thousands of tests for more than 100 companies, helping to build the modern consumer goods supply chain we know today.

“No company has access to more supply chains than CHEP. Our supply chain expertise and testing capabilities form a powerful combination that improves supply chain efficiency and helps our customers serve their consumers better and faster every day,” concluded Mr. Eugrin.

Source: CHEP
Further Reading

Suspicious Fires Are Causing Big Concerns in Local Pallet Yards

Brambles Announces 2016 Sustainability Review

Judgement Against Overtime Rule Offers Reprieve

Softwood Dispute Heats Up as US Coalition Files Petition

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Go Fast Manufacturing
North American Forest Products
Northwest Hardwoods
PLIB
PRS
Pallet Machinery Group
Rotochopper
Timber Products Inspection
Viking Engineering & Development

Upcoming Events

12/06/2016-12/07/2016  PDS Training Course, Alexandria, Virginia
Email: bgetting@palletcentral.com


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