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Wood Products Council Launches Major Program to Support the Use of Wood in Non-residential Structures

WoodWorks provides technical assistance and education for architects, engineers and builders

(February 20, 2008 – Tacoma, Wa.) The Wood Products Council announces the launch of WoodWorks, a major new program designed to support the use of wood in non-residential building applications.

“WoodWorks was established to provide resources that allow architects, engineers, contractors (AEC) and others to design and build commercial and other non-residential structures out of wood more easily and at less cost,” said Dwight Yochim, national director of the WoodWorks program.

“The intent is to support AEC professionals considering the use of wood and continue that support from design through construction. We provide free education and training in areas such as wood-related code issues, fire protection, wind and seismic design, durability and green building, as well as one-stop access to resources provided by wood associations nationwide.”

WoodWorks is now available in two initial markets—California and the Southeast (Georgia and the Carolinas) —and will be launched in the North-central U.S. (Minnesota, Illinois and Wisconsin) in the spring. Each market includes a field team of individuals qualified to provide a wide range of architectural, engineering and code support, which in turn is supported by a national team as well as the member associations of the Wood Products Council.

“One of our challenges is to communicate the advantages of using wood—which are significant—to people who may never have considered it for non-residential projects,” said Pat Schleisman, regional director of WoodWorks Southeast. An engineer by trade who, like most people in the field, received little training in wood design while in school, Schleisman added, “Wood provides more value, environmentally and in terms of its beauty and design flexibility, for less cost than other materials, while meeting fire, safety and other code requirements.”

Among its benefits:

- Wood is an inherently “green” building material. In addition to being renewable and sustainable over the long term, it outperforms steel and concrete in most life cycle assessment (LCA) categories—including global warming potential, air and water pollution and embodied energy (which includes the energy required to extract, process, manufacture, transport and maintain the material over time).
- Wood also has an important role to play in the fight against climate change. While humans contribute carbon dioxide (CO₂) to the atmosphere by burning fossil fuels, growing trees absorb CO₂ and release clean oxygen. Some of the CO₂ is absorbed into the soil and the rest is stored in trees—and wood products made from trees—until they burn or biodegrade. Wood also contributes to a building’s energy efficiency.
- Wood performs well both seismically and in high wind areas. The attachment of sheathing and finishes to the numerous wood joists and studs in a typical wood-frame structure provides redundant load paths for an earthquake’s forces or high wind. Wood buildings also tend to be lighter and more flexible, and are very effective at resisting lateral loads.

“One of the roles of our field staff is to help design teams understand what’s allowable in the International Building Code and state building codes,” said Bryan Schuyler, regional director of WoodWorks California. “When the IBC was introduced in 2000, it provided a much greater range of options for wood-frame commercial buildings. We want to help people take advantage of that.”

The WoodWorks program encompasses a full range of building types, including: retail, offices, hotels, schools, industrial, religious, recreation, public and health care. Field staff are available to discuss specific issues and have the expertise to provide a wide range of architectural, engineering and code support, either in person or through in-house presentations to an entire firm or design team.

Upcoming events sponsored by WoodWorks include:

Southeast Wood Solutions Fair:

March 27 - Charlotte, NC

Luncheon Seminars: Green Building

March 11 - San Diego, CA

March 12 - Costa Mesa, CA

March 13 - Los Angeles, CA

Full-day Seminars: Wood Works for Building Design

March 19 – Sacramento, CA

March 20 – San Francisco, CA

March 25 – Atlanta, GA

For event descriptions or to register, visit www.woodworks.org.

About WoodWorks

WoodWorks is an initiative of the Wood Products Council, which is a cooperative venture of all the major wood associations in North America, as well as research organizations and government agencies. For more information, visit www.WoodWorks.org.

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