



# NEWS

**For Immediate Release**  
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## **WISCONSIN'S LEADERSHIP IN THE FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY TO BE PROMOTED AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN ATLANTA**

**MADISON** - - Wisconsin's \$18.7 billion forest products industry will be marketed at the Western Hemisphere's largest woodworking show next week in an effort to bring more investment, businesses and employment to the state. Forward Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and UW-Madison Department of Forest Ecology & Management will partner with several economic development professionals from around the state in attending the International Woodworking Machinery & Supply Fair-USA (IWF 2006) on August 23-26, 2006 in Atlanta, Georgia.

"Wisconsin does offer a strong advantage for forest products companies and we believe that we have a great story to tell firms that are seeking to expand in the sector," said Forward Wisconsin President Pepi Randolph. "Our state is one of the few that has increased its forest lands in the last 20 years; we continue to grow more wood than we remove, and Wisconsin ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in the U.S. in forest products capital investments."

Forest products are one of three industries that are being specifically targeted by Forward Wisconsin for attraction and expansion this year, as well as one of ten critical industries identified by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce. In addition to being the number one papermaking state for over 50 years, Wisconsin has a cluster of businesses in the forest products area.

These cluster firms include companies in primary wood processing, secondary wood products, printing and publishing and something that may not come immediately to mind – forest related tourism. To remain globally competitive, Wisconsin's forest products industry has also very much become a technology-rich business sector. In examining the overall sector, Wisconsin's forest product industry is the 2<sup>nd</sup> large industry sector in the state (with annual shipments valued at close to \$30 billion) and one that is two and a half times larger than that our neighboring states of Minnesota and Michigan.

"Forest product industry jobs offer higher annual wages than the statewide average so bringing more employment to Wisconsin in this sector is an important part of our economic development strategy," said Randolph. "The state's forest products industry ranks as the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> largest employer in 42 of Wisconsin's 72 counties so that tells you how critical it is to grow this business cluster and keep it healthy."

As part of Wisconsin's forest products industry marketing effort at IWF 2006, the group will distribute the Department of Natural Resources' recently-updated Primary and Secondary Wood Using Industry Directories, as well as a marketing piece that was developed by Forward Wisconsin and its partners. At last count, Wisconsin had over 1,850 forest products companies with a forest products industry that is directly responsible for 100,000 manufacturing jobs - the largest component of our state's manufacturing work force – with another 160,000 workers that indirectly support the forest products industry.

IWF 2006 will feature representatives from over 70 countries with 55 percent of registrants representing top management – the audience that Forward Wisconsin and its partners will be targeting with its Wisconsin pro-business, marketing message. The Wisconsin team will also be visiting with over 1,200 companies at the Georgia World Congress Center that are exhibiting at the show to determine if they have business expansion plans.

The Forward Wisconsin Team representing Wisconsin at IWF 2006 includes:

Andy Albarado	Rusk County Economic Development Corporation
Jan Alf	Forward Wisconsin
Scott Bowe	UW-Madison, Forest Ecology & Management Dept.
Brian Doudna	Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation
Nancy Elsing	Columbia County Economic Development Corporation
Steve Hubbard	UW-Madison, Forest Ecology & Management Dept.
Vern Kenas	Xcel Energy
Roger Luce	Marathon County Economic Development Corporation
Terry Mace	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Betty Nowak	Port of Milwaukee
Ted Penn	Wisconsin Public Service Corporation
Pepi Randolph	Forward Wisconsin
John Rogers	Kewaunee County Economic Development Corporation
Laurel Sukup	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Douglas Venable	City of Janesville

Forward Wisconsin, Inc., ([ForwardWI.com](http://ForwardWI.com)), created in 1984, is a unique public-private state marketing organization. Its job is marketing Wisconsin's business advantages outside the state to educate decision-makers on the positive benefits of living, working, playing and doing business in Wisconsin. Governor Jim Doyle is Forward Wisconsin's Chairman of the Board.