

NELMA's 89th Annual Meeting

The Wentworth by the Sea Resort in New Castle, New Hampshire played host to the 89th Annual Meeting of the Northeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association (NELMA), September 21 to 23, 2022. *Winning Strategies: Double Down with NELMA* served as this meeting's theme.

The 3-day program welcomed 142 members and guests to the venue, the largest gathering in the past 5 years of this traditional September meeting of the lumber industry. The event always begins with the NELMA Golf Scramble, this year held at the Breakfast Hill Golf Club in Greenland, New Hampshire. 52 golfers in 13 foursomes enjoyed a beautiful New England day on the links. The team of Robert and Pam Johnson (Johnson Lumber), and Adam Duplisea and Henco Viljoen (Nyle Kilns) took top honors with a winning gross score of 63. Second Place went to the team of Matt Duprey, John Cole, Aaron Schulte (Hancock Lumber) and Bernie Nugent (Warren Trask). The Third Place prize went to the team of Alex and Bryan Darrah (Durgin & Crowell), and John Krueger and Eric McCoy (Seaboard International). The longest drive winners, ladies and men, were Rebecca Lowell (Lowell Lumber) and Eric McCoy (Seaboard International).



A total of 13 exhibits and product displays lined the Welcome Reception space on Wednesday evening following the golf scramble to kick-off the all-important networking opportunities scheduled during the meeting. The exhibits continued to welcome visitors during Thursday's Breakfast. The Morning Business Session followed with NELMA Chairman Chris Brochu (Pleasant River Lumber) providing the official welcome. Jeff Easterling, NELMA President discussed the State of the Association, updating members with current operational information that covered staffing and financial highlights. Chairman Brochu recognized the Safety Award winners for 2022 based on 2021 mill performance. The winners for the Combined Operations (Sawmill and Planer Mill) were: Division I (< 50,000 hours), Hammond Lumber – Belgrade, Maine; Division II (>50,000 to 100,000 hours), Pleasant River Pine - Hancock, Maine; Division III (>100,000 to 150,000 hours), Durgin & Crowell – New London, New Hampshire; and Division IV (>150,000 hours), Pleasant River Lumber – Dover Foxcroft, Maine.

Up next was the offering of a slate of nominations to the Board of Directors, approved by the general membership. The list includes the re-election of the current officers for their second year of their 2-year term: Chairman: Chris Brochu (Pleasant River); 1st Vice Chair: Susan Coulombe (Irving Forest Products); 2nd Vice-Chair: Matt Duprey (Hancock Lumber), and Treasurer: B. Manning (Sawmill Associates). For the Board of Directors: Bob Mai (PotlatchDeltic) for a 3-year term, and Alex Darrah (Durgin & Crowell) for a 3-year term. Robert Moses of Britton Lumber was re-elected as an at-large, one-year term representative to the Advisory Committee.

NELMA's extensive marketing programs and activities were highlighted by Jeff Easterling, followed by an overview of a plethora of public relations activities during the year by Kim Drew (Drew PR and NELMA Consultant). The PR report provided a natural segue into the next event, a live audience podcast of *From the Woodshed* with Ashley and Ryan Eldridge and Chase Morrill, all of Maine Cabin Masters television fame.

Thursday's Industry Luncheon welcomed guest speaker, Donna Blevins, billed as the Big Girl of Poker at 6'5" tall. In addition to tidbits about her views of poker playing, Ms. Blevins provided a unique approach to inward self-help and awareness to the audience.

Following lunch, the afternoon session began with the signature economic presentation by Paul Janke of Forest Economic Advisors (FEA) with this year's topic of "Will Rising Interest Rates Cause a Recession or Merely a Slowdown?" And for the second year, the Northeast Regional Meeting of the North America Wholesale Lumber Association (NAWLA) was embedded within the NELMA Annual meeting. And back by popular demand, Speed Dating returned, the ultimate high-energy networking event for lumber buyers and sellers. 10 mills (sellers) welcomed 26 buyers in a 5-minute meet & greet frenzy that incorporated over 2 hours of important business interactions. Thursday's packed business day ended with the evening's Chairman's Reception and Dinner that concluded with the Golf Awards and Best Poker Hand prize winner announcement.

The 89th Annual Meeting's ended with Friday morning's Board of Directors meeting that incorporated important industry issue updates from Zoltan Van Heyningen of the U.S. Coalition for Fair Lumber that briefed the group on the ongoing U.S./Canada lumber legal case, and Phil Ruck of Stillwater Engineering with an update and timeline on New England state environmental deadlines that will impact sawmill operations.

NELMA would like to extend a very special thank you to this year's generous sponsors of the Annual Meeting. The High Rollers: Capital Forest Products, Eastern Insurance, Irving Forest Products, and Seaboard International Forest Products. The Card Sharks: Corley, Durgin & Crowell, Hancock Lumber, H.E. Smith, Northeast Machine Solutions, and Valutec. The Pit Bosses: Daaquam Maine, Diorio Forest Products, Microtec, Nyle Dry Kilns, and Sandy Neck Traders.

Mark your calendars to attend the 90th Annual Meeting, to be held September 20-22, 2023 at the Samoset Resort in Rockport, Maine!