

NELMA's 91st Annual Meeting Held September 17-19

The 91st annual meeting of the Northeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association (NELMA) was held September 17-19 at the Samoset Resort in Rockport, Maine. This was the second year in a row that the Association conducted its annual golf scramble and meeting at this oceanside property. Around 150 members and guests attended this year's event, making it one of the largest meetings in more than 5 years.

The annual golf scramble kicked things off on the morning of the 17th with fifty-four participants that took the challenge of competing on the Resort's course nicknamed "The Pebble Beach of the East". In a tiebreaker, the team from Pleasant River of Jason Brochu, Chris Brochu, Toby Pineo, and Rich Smith won with a gross score of 61. Second place, also with a 61 score was the team of Ricky LeClerc and Andrew Gorey of Seaboard International and Chris Bagley of Haley Ward. The longest drive (Hole 18) for men was Eric McCoy of Seaboard International; women's winner-Pam Johnson of Johnson Pine. And the closest to the pin (Hole 11) was Paul Lennon of Davis & Towle; women's winner-Madison Roy of Irving Forest Products.

The first official event followed the golf scramble with the Exhibits & Displays by NELMA's Associate members, with nineteen exhibits available for attendees to meet with and see the latest sawmill equipment, software, and engineering technology. The Welcome Reception offered additional meet & greet time with the exhibitors, in addition to the following morning's Industry Breakfast co-located with the displays.

A full day of Business Sessions were planned for Day 2 that began with the Annual Business Meeting of the Membership. NELMA's Chair, Susan Coulombe of Irving Forest Products, opened the morning session, first thanking the meeting sponsors for their generosity: Gold Sponsors-Irving Forest Products and Seaboard International, Silver Sponsors-Diorio Forest Products, Durgin & Crowell, Fontaine, Hancock Lumber, and Sawmill Associates, and Bronze Level Sponsors-Capital Forest Products, DiPrizio Pine Sales, Johnson Pine, Pleasant River Lumber, Robbins Lumber, and Sandy Neck Traders. Following the "State of the Association," presentation by NELMA President Jeff Easterling, Susan recognized the Combined Operations winners of the 2024 Safety Awards: Division 1-Hammond Lumber, Division 2-Robbins Lumber East Baldwin Mill, Division 3-Hancock Lumber Pittsfield Mill, and Division 4-Irving Forest Products Ashland Mill. Susan reported that eighteen mills submitted OSHA Performance data, totaling a bit over two million man-hours for all their Sawmill and Planer operations. She also reported that seven mills with combined operation man-hours of 900,000 had a no loss-time, accident-free year in 2023.

The final General Business Meeting agenda item was Nominations to the NELMA Board of Directors and Advisory Committee. The following individuals were unanimously approved: For re-appointment of the current officers for the final year of their 2-year term; Chair, Susan Coulombe-Irving Forest Products, 1st Vice-Chair, Matt Duprey-Hancock Lumber, 2nd Vice-Chair, Jason Brochu-Pleasant River Lumber, and Treasurer, Robert "Bob" Moses of Britton Lumber. For a second 3-year term to the Board of Directors, Arkon Horne-Daaquam Maine and Jim Dermody-Seaboard International (Associate Representative). And B. Manning of Sawmill Associates for the position of Advisory Committee At-Large Representative.

Immediately following the General Business Meeting of the Membership, marketing and promotional activity updates were provided by Jeff Easterling, followed by Kim Drew, with the NELMA Public Relations Report. This included an update from Chase Morrill of the Maine Cabin Masters on renovation projects that received donations from NELMA's member mills. The feature event of the morning was the Forest Industry Panel presentation and discussion whose goal was to answer the age-old question of "How Does That Sell a Stick of Lumber?" This one-of-a-kind panel consisted of Simon Hyoun of the Softwood Lumber Board, Jackson Morrill of the American Wood Council, Rose Braden of the Softwood Export Council, and Russell Edgar of the University of Maine's Wood Composites Laboratory. Each presenter summarized programs and activities of their organizations that are benefiting the forest products industry, followed by a Q&A from the audience to follow-up on information that they provided.

Following the Morning Business Session, attendees enjoyed the Industry Lunch where the premiere of the PBS Series, America's Forests with Chuck Leavell, which featured the state of Maine in two episodes was shown to attendees. Several industry companies along with NELMA had sponsored and assisted with the content for these episodes that will be shown this fall to a nationwide audience.

The afternoon business session began with the always anticipated presentation by Paul Janke of Forest Economic Advisors (FEA) who helped answer the question of "Rate Cuts, Elections, Pent-up Demand, and Affordable Housing: Is There Light at the End of the Tunnel or is that a Train?"

And back for the fourth year, the NAWLA Northeast Regional Meeting was embedded within NELMA's Annual Meeting. Speed Networking (formerly Speed Dating) was the action that put lumber wholesalers in front of 9 of NELMA's lumber mills, with a 5-minute time limit to meet & greet and talk quick business. Matt Bruno, NAWLA Executive Director, welcomed everyone to the event "on the green," then the organized chaos began! Always enjoyed by all!

The Chair's Reception and Dinner ended Day 2, with the 91st Annual Meeting concluding with the Board of Directors Meeting Day 3. Mark your calendar for the 92nd Annual Meeting, to be held September 9-11 at Hyatt's Spruce Peak Lodge in Stowe, Vermont!

The logo for the Northeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association (NELMA) features the acronym "NELMA" in a bold, green, sans-serif font. A registered trademark symbol (®) is positioned to the right of the letter "A".

Northeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association